

Report of the Director of City Strategy

## **City of York Council – Strategic Flood Risk Assessment**

### **Summary**

1. This report advises Members on the production of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for York as recommended by national planning guidance in Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS25) (Development and Flood Risk) and regional planning guidance in the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (draft for public consultation December 2005). The report outlines the requirements of PPS25 and the Regional Spatial Strategy (December 2005) and the key components of the proposed SFRA. A draft of the SFRA main report is attached as Annex A to this report, the SFRA appendices and associated maps are available in the Members Library, in Guildhall Reception and from the author of the report. Members are asked to approve this document for publication as part of the Local Development Framework evidence base.

### **Background**

2. PPS25 sets out the governments policy on planning for flood risk. The guidance recommends that a SFRA should be carried out by the local planning authority to inform the preparation of its Local Development Documents (LDD's), having regard to catchment-wide flooding issues which affect the area. The SFRA will be a key part of the Local Development Framework evidence base which will inform the Core Strategy, the Key Allocations DPD and the Area Action Plans for York North West and the City Centre.
3. The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (December 2005) also highlights the risk and management of flooding for the region. The planning guidance advises that: "Local Authorities should undertake strategic flood risk assessments". Policy ENV1 states that "development in high flood risk areas will be avoided, where possible, flood management will be undertaken pro actively and the allocation of areas for development will take place in line with strategic flood risk assessments".
4. The City of York Council's SFRA which was undertaken by the Council's Engineering Consultancy assess the different levels of flood risk in the York Local Authority area and maps these to assist with statutory land use

planning. It provides concise information on flood risk issues to aid planners in the preparation of the Local Development Framework and in the assessment of future planning applications.

### **Key Components of SFRA**

5. The proposed SFRA, attached as Annex A to this report, covers five key areas each of which is detailed below:
  - i. Introduction – outlines the background into the effects of flooding and how it has affected the York area and highlights the purpose of the assessment.
  - ii. Background – provides an overview of York’s river network including a broad description of the general physical characteristics, the influences of climate change, and international, national, regional and local planning policies.
  - iii. Flood Risk in York : Key Issues – assesses in detail the flood risk issues affecting the three main rivers in York namely the River Ouse, the River Foss and the River Derwent, and highlights the key issues for each catchment.
  - iv. Approach to Flood Risk – detailed recommendations are provided for a future policy approach for the York area in each flood risk zone. These are split into two sections covering Forward Planning and Development Control.
  - v. Sequential Test and Exception Test - provides detailed information on the Sequential Test and the Exception Test for the York Local Authority Area. The guidance is split down into Forward Planning and Development Control.

### **Options**

6. Members have two options relating to the proposed SFRA:

**Option 1:** To approve the SFRA, attached as Annex A, for publication as part of the Local Development Framework evidence base.

**Option 2:** To seek amendments to the SFRA through the recommendations of the Working Group or alternatively request that Officers prepare an alternative flood risk document.

### **Analysis**

7. The SFRA has been produced inline with national and regional planning policy which recommends that Local Authorities prepare such a study. The SFRA assesses and evaluates the different levels of flood risk in the York Local Authority Area, and maps these to assist with land use planning. It will inform the preparation of the Local Development Framework and in the assessment of future planning applications by Development Control, having regard to catchment-wide flooding issues.

8. The SFRA provides a comprehensive assessment of flood risk, which takes the advice given by the Environment Agency further. The Environment Agency have produced flood risk maps which divide flood risk into three different zones these include Zone 1 (Little or no risk) Zone 2 (Low to medium risk) and Zone 3 (High risk). Through meeting and liaising with the Environment Agency regarding work on the SFRA, it has helped refine the mapping of their three zones. In addition the SFRA has subdivided Zone 3 (High Risk) taking into account local variations and flood defences into the following:
  - 3a (i) – areas at high risk of flooding which are currently defended to the appropriate minimum standard as defined by PPS25 (1 in 100-year protection)
  - 3a (ii) – areas at high risk of flooding which are currently defended to the appropriate minimum standard for existing development as defined by Defra (50 year-protection), but are not defended to the appropriate minimum standard for new development as defined by PPS25 (1 in 100-year protection)
  - 3a (iii) – areas at high risk of flooding which are not currently defended to the appropriate minimum standard as defined by Defra (50-year protection) and
  - 3b - Functional Flood Plains
9. The SFRA reflects PPS25 in that when considering new development a sequential risk based approach must be taken, which steers new development to areas at lowest probability of flooding (Zone 1, then Zone 2 then Zone 3a(i), 3a(ii), 3a(iii) and 3(b)). In addition the SFRA also provides advice on the different types of development which may not be suitable in different flood risk zones.
10. The SFRA indicates when an Exception Test should be considered. The Exception Test provides a method of managing flood risk while still allowing necessary development to occur for wider sustainable development reasons. This is clearly a key consideration in York where some of our key Brownfield regeneration sites are in flood risk areas.

## **Key Implications for the Local Development Framework**

### **Core Strategy**

11. The LDF Core Strategy will direct the nature and location of growth by delivering a spatial strategy and a series of strategic policies.
12. The spatial strategy will consider the characteristics of York's main urban area and outlying villages alongside other evidence base work which considers York's physical and environmental constraints, including the SFRA. Based on this analysis, the outcome will be a strategy which identifies a hierarchy of settlements to which differing levels of growth would be directed. The emerging Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation document will invite

views on which influences/constraints should inform the spatial strategy, and will present options for how the different flood zones identified on the GIS based maps should constrain growth.

13. In terms of strategic policy, a key objective of the LDF is to ensure that new development is not subject to, nor contributes to, inappropriate levels of flood risk, taking into account the full likely impacts of climate changes. Here, the issues and options paper will consider the types of development which may be appropriate in the flood zones identified, within the context of PPS25 and the 'sequential test'. This will deliver a proactive policy approach to future land allocations and also set the policy framework against which we would assess future development proposals within land at risk of flooding.

### **Key Allocations Development Plan Document**

14. The SFRA will form part of the evidence base to support the allocation of sites in the Key Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD). The Key Allocations DPD will show all the sites which have been specifically identified for development in order to meet the Council's vision and objectives and the strategic policies of the Core Strategy. The level of flood risk as assessed by the SFRA will be a key part of the criteria used to determine whether sites are appropriate for different types of development and to prioritise the development of sites in accordance with the sequential test. The flood risk zones and associated maps set out in the SFRA enable a full understanding of the anticipated level of flood risk when allocating a site for a specific use.

### **Area Action Plans**

15. The SFRA will also provide a key part of the evidence base in determining the nature, type and location of development in the City Centre and the York North West Action Areas, taking an approach as set out above at paragraph 14.

### **Corporate Priorities**

16. The proposed SFRA supports the following Corporate Strategy Priorities:
  - improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the City's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces;
  - improve leadership at all levels to provide clear, consistent direction to the organisation; and
  - Improve the way the Council and its partners work together to deliver better services for the people who live in York.

## Implications

17. Implications are as listed below:

- **Financial:** There are no Financial implications
- **Human Resources (HR):** There are no HR implications.
- **Equalities:** There are no Equalities implications.
- **Legal:** There are no Legal implications
- **Crime and Disorder:** There are no Crime and Disorder implications.
- **Information Technology (IT):** There are no IT implications.
- **Property:** There are no property implications.
- **Other:** There are no other known implications.

## Risk Management

18. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy. There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

## Recommendations

19. That Members:

- (i) approve, subject to the recommendations of this working group, the proposed Strategic Flood Risk Assessment included as Annex A to this report, for publication as part of the Local Development Framework evidence base

Reason: So that the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment can be used as part of the Local Development Framework evidence base.

- (ii) delegate to the Director of City Strategy in consultation with the Executive Member for City Strategy, the making of any other necessary changes arising from the recommendation of the LDF Working Group, prior to its publication as part of the Local Development Framework evidence base.

Reason: So that any recommended changes can be incorporated into the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment prior to its publication.

## Contact Details

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Report Approved

Date 18/06/2007

**Specialist Implications Officers:** *None*

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:**

None

**Annex A: City of York Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Main Document)**