

Committee: Planning Policy Working Group

Agenda Item

Date: 27 January 2016

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Title: Uttlesford Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Author: Sarah Nicholas, Senior Planning Officer

Summary

1. The Council commissioned JBA Consulting to undertake a Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. This will replace the 2008 SFRA which had also been prepared by JBA Consulting.
2. The Final Report January 2016 can be viewed on the website at <http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/backgroundstudies#Uttlesford%20Strategic%20Flood%20Risk%20Assessment>

Recommendations

3. That the Working Group notes the published report and its inclusion as part of the Local Plan evidence base.

Financial Implications

4. Cost of the Assessment was met from existing budgets.

Background Papers

5. None

Impact

- 6.

Communication/Consultation	The SFRA will be published on the website as part of the Local Plan evidence base
Community Safety	The SFRA will provide evidence to ensure that development avoids area vulnerable to flooding.
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	The SFRA will provide evidence to ensure that development is located in sustainable

	locations.
Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

7. The Council first commissioned a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) in March 2008. Since that time there have been significant changes to legislation relating to both flood risk and planning policy. There have also been a number of additions to the available flood risk data. Hence the need to prepare a new Assessment.
8. The SFRA is a planning tool that will assist the Council in its selection and development of sustainable development sites away from vulnerable flood risk areas in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and its associated Planning Practice Guidance on Flood Risk and Coastal Change.
9. The purpose of this Level 1 SFRA is to provide an updated high level assessment and mapping of flood risk from all sources across the district, to provide an individual flood risk analysis of the Areas of Search identified within the district as part of the Local Plan preparation, to provide guidance to planners and developers on flood risk and to provide an evidence base for the application of the Sequential Test. This test is designed to ensure that areas at little or no risk of flooding from any source are developed in preference to areas at higher risk. Areas in flood zone 1 have a low probability of flooding at less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of flooding; land in zone 2 has a medium probability of between 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 annual probability of river flooding; land in zone 3a has a high probability of between 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding; and land in zone 3b is functional floodplain where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood.
10. Chapter 3 of the Assessment considers existing flood risk. Uttlesford is located in the headwaters of three major catchments (Great Ouse, North Essex and Thames). The floodplains tend to be well defined and limited in their extent by the topography of the district. Many of the district's settlements have experienced flooding in the past. Saffron Walden has been identified as a Tier 2 area of local flood risk (500-1000 people at risk) by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) due to its surface water risk and flood history, and Clavering, Great Dunmow, Manuden, Radwinter, Takeley, Thaxted and Stansted Mountfitchet have been identified as Tier 3 areas (more than 1000 people at risk). Other areas within Uttlesford that have been identified as having a surface water flooding problem through the flood history review include Little Hallingbury and Little Dunmow. Groundwater and sewer flooding are limited and localised.
11. The effect of climate change has been assessed. In most catchments, the extent of Flood Zone 3 is not likely to increase significantly with climate change due to the confined topography. However climate change is predicted to result in more frequent and extreme rainfall events, increasing the

frequency and severity (depth/hazard) of flooding from fluvial and surface water sources.

12. Chapter 4 explains how we assess flood risk for planning, the Flood Zones and explains the sequential approach. It outlines the sources of national and local flood risk mapping data, information and evidence available for use in the SFRA.
13. Chapter 5 and Appendix B assess the flood risk of the Areas of Search identified in the Issues and Options consultation of October – December 2015. The assessment concludes that, other planning considerations aside, it should be possible to keep the majority of major developments within Flood Zone 1 and away from other sources of flood risk. The Areas of Search are very large, and so none of them can be ruled out on flood risk grounds, however all of them have some local flood risk identified. Some of the settlements have already been identified as Tier 2 or 3 flood risk areas, and there should be close consultation with the LLFA if these are to be taken forward. There are also several Areas of Search where development could have a significant impact on flood risk downstream if sustainable drainage system (SuDS) principles and strict controls on runoff are not enforced.
14. As the preparation of the Local Plan progresses and the sequential approach is applied, it may be found that land in Flood Zone 1 cannot appropriately accommodate all the necessary development (creating the need to apply the NPPF's Exception Test). In these circumstances a Level 2 SFRA should be undertaken to consider the detailed nature of the flood characteristics within the Flood Zones for such sites in more detail (depths, velocities, hazard etc).
15. There are also likely to be very large sites where a small percentage of the site is within Flood Zone 2 or 3. Here, the expectation must be that all built development is within Flood Zone 1 and Flood Zone areas are preserved as green space. In these cases, detailed site-specific Flood Risk Assessments should be enough to ensure that the Flood Zones are defined by hydraulic modelling, the effect of climate change is considered and that development is compliant with the NPPF.
16. Chapters 6 and 7 provide guidance for both planners and developers. The guidance should be read in conjunction with the NPPF and flood risk guidance from the Environment Agency. The guidance addresses requirements for development in each of the Flood Zones, making development safe, river restoration and enhancement as part of development, dealing with existing watercourses and assets, developer contributions to flood risk improvements, dealing with surface water runoff and drainage, wastewater, water quality and biodiversity.

Risk Analysis

17.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the Local	1. Little or no	Land would be	The Level 1 SFRA

<p>Plan identifies sites for development in area vulnerable to flooding.</p>	<p>risk</p>	<p>developed which may in the future flood with subsequent costs to the occupiers and the council</p>	<p>provides a high level mapping of areas of flood risk. A level 2 SFRA will be undertaken if it is found that there is insufficient land within Flood Zone 1 to accommodate all the necessary development. As the Council move forward with the Local Plan, it will use the most up to date information in applying the Sequential Test.</p>
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1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.