

Environment Agency Guidance Relating to Planning Policy Guidance Note 25:**Development Greater than 1.0 Hectares in Flood Zone 1 (FRA2)****Guidance on Undertaking a Flood Risk Assessment for Planning Applications Covered by Agency Standing Advice to Local Planning Authorities**

Appendix F of PPG25 provides general guidance on Flood Risk Assessment requirements. However, this guidance note relates specifically to the commissioning and undertaking of flood risk assessment studies for development of less than 1.0 ha in **Flood Zone 1**. This includes all development in **GREEN** and **GREY** cells of **Flood Zone 1**.

Why is a FRA required?

In Flood Zone 1, where the risk of flooding from fluvial or tidal sources is lower, a Flood Risk Assessment is still required but it should be focused on the management of surface water run-off. Development that increases the amount of impermeable surfaces can result in an increase in surface water run-off, which in turn can result in increased flood risk both on site and elsewhere within the catchment. This is particularly important for these larger scale sites which have the potential to generate large volumes of surface water run-off.

What is the Environment Agency's Role?

While the Environment Agency will always provide bespoke advice for all 'red cell' development, we will not provide bespoke advice for developments that fall within the green cells in Flood Zone 1, or any associated flood risk assessments. However for sites between 1-5 ha in Flood Zone 1, it is recommended that the FRA is agreed with the Environment Agency at pre-application stage enabling a "Letter of Compliance" to be issued prior to submission to the Planning Authority. This approach has been adopted with the aim of speeding up the determination of applications.

If the proposal is within the Byelaw Distance of a Main River or flood defence structure or includes the diversion or culverting of an ordinary watercourse then formal consent for the proposal may also be required from the Agency. Prior to carrying out a FRA, developers should contact the Environment Agency and other operating authorities to establish what information is available relating to flood risk at the site they propose to develop.

What should be in the FRA?

The detail and technical complexity of a flood risk assessment will reflect the scale, nature and location of the development. The following list sets out the kind of information that should be submitted as a FRA for developments of greater than 1ha in Flood Zone 1:

PLANS

1. A location plan that includes geographical features, street names and identifies the catchment, watercourses or other bodies of water in the vicinity.
2. A plan of the site showing:
 - existing site
 - development proposals and
 - description of any structures which may influence local hydraulics. This will include bridges, pipes/ducts crossing the watercourse, culverts, screens, embankments, walls, outfalls and condition of channel.

SURVEYS

1. Site levels related to Ordnance Datum/GPS, both existing and proposed.

ASSESSMENTS

1. The Applicant should submit:
Information about the surface water disposal measures already in place and their state of maintenance.
2. An assessment of the volume of surface water run-off likely to be generated from the proposed development.
3. Information on how that surface water run-off will be disposed of from the new development (e.g. soakaway, combined sewer, direct to watercourse, SUDs etc.
4. Estimates should also be made of how climate change could affect the probability and intensity of events in the future.

Information about any other potential sources flooding to the site - streams, ditches, sewers, groundwater, overland surface water flow or any combination of these.

5 copies of this information should be submitted to the local planning authority with the planning application. Failure to do so could delay the determination of the application.

Note: An additional issue that may need to be considered for development in Flood Zone 1 is that of 'dry islands'. These are areas within Flood Zone 1 that are completely surrounded by areas at a higher risk of flooding i.e. areas falling within Flood Zones 3 and 2. In certain cases development within '**dry islands**' can present particular hazards to public safety and risks such as those risks associated with maintaining a means of safe access and exit for occupants during flood events. The distribution of dry islands and risks posed by them in terms of access/exit vary considerably across the country. If you are in any doubt about how flood risks associated with 'dry islands' may affect your area, please contact your local Environment Agency office.