

# **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Who commissioned this piece of work?**

In December 2007 Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) in conjunction with the six districts councils of Cheltenham, Cotswold, Forest of Dean, Gloucester, Stroud and Tewkesbury commissioned Halcrow to carry out a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. The SFRA was carried out in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS 25) *Development and Flood Risk*. PPS 25 sets out the Government's policy on development and flood risk.

### **What is a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment?**

The purpose of an SFRA is to assess and map all forms of flood risk from groundwater, surface water, impounded water bodies, sewer, river and tidal sources, taking into account future climate change. The SFRA is a document which informs councils of the nature of flood risk within their administrative areas and aids the decision making process when determining planning applications.

### **Why do we need a SFRA?**

It is required by PPS 25 to steer new development away from areas at risk of flooding. The SFRA forms part of the evidence base for the preparation of the Local Development Framework (LDF) and in particular the Core Strategy produced by the six district councils. GCC is responsible for producing the Minerals & Waste Development Framework (MWDF) within which the minerals & waste core strategies are located. This situation is unique to shire counties in two tier government areas.

The SFRA will be taken into account when determining planning applications and will inform site-specific flood risk assessments where the proposed development is in areas of flood risk.

### **Why are there two levels?**

The level one SFRA involves collecting existing data on all sources of flooding and mapping them so that the data is presented in a comprehensive way. The flood zone maps are based on the Environment Agency's flood maps. They delineate the flood zones, ranging from flood zone 1 – low probability through to flood zone 3b which is the functional floodplain.

The level two SFRA is a more detailed analysis of the risk from all sources of flooding to potential development sites that are being considered as part of the process of site selection for the LDF.

### **Where has the information come from?**

In accordance with PPS 25 and its Practice Guide 2006 areas of 'low', 'medium', and 'high' risk have been mapped using data from the Environment Agency, Gloucestershire County Council, the six district councils, water companies, the Highways Agency and British Waterways.

### **Sequential approach to assessment of flood risk**

The sequential test is set out in PPS 25. It is a risk based approach to site selection and aims to steer new development to areas at the lowest probability of flooding. It sets out flood zones with different levels of flood risk and the types of development that are considered appropriate to be located in each respective zone.

Local Planning Authorities allocating land in Local Development Documents for development should apply the sequential test to demonstrate that there are no reasonably available sites in areas with a lower probability of flooding that would be appropriate to the type of development or land use proposed.

### **What is the Exception Test?**

If, following application of the sequential test in PPS 25, it is not possible or consistent with wider sustainability objectives, for the development to be located in zones of lower probability of flooding, the exception test can be applied in accordance with detailed guidance in PPS 25. The test provides a method of managing flood risk while still allowing necessary development to occur.

### **Does this affect me?**

It may do., The maps show in broad detail which areas of the county are susceptible to flooding.

### **Where can I find out more?**

For more information on flooding contact the Environment Agency on the flooding hotline: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/>