



Stafford
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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FLOOD AND COASTAL DEFENCE POLICY

**STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
POLICY STATEMENT ON FLOOD AND COASTAL EROSION RISK
MANAGEMENT**

1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose

- 1.1 This policy statement has been prepared by Stafford Borough Council to provide a public statement of the Council's approach to flood and coastal defence in its area.

Background

- 1.2 The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has policy responsibility for flood and coastal defence in England. However, delivery is the responsibility of a number of flood and coastal defence "operating authorities" ie the Environment Agency, local authorities and internal drainage boards. Responsibilities differ according to the type of operating authority and Stafford Borough Council's responsibilities are set out in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 following.
- 1.3 The Government has published a policy aim and three objectives for flood and coastal defence¹. To ensure a more certain delivery of the aim and objectives by the individual operating authorities the Government has published a series of high level targets². The first target requires each operating authority to publish a policy delivering the Government's policy aim and objectives in their area. This will include their assessment of flooding and coastal erosion risk in their area, and the plans for reducing or managing that risk.
- 1.4 This policy statement fulfils the above requirement. Copies are available from the Planning and Engineering Section, Stafford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford and on the Internet at www.staffordbc.gov.uk. We are also providing a copy to:-
- the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
 - the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
 - the Environment Agency;
 - the Sow and Penk Internal Drainage Board

2 HOW THE COUNCIL WILL DELIVER THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY AND AIM AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Stafford Borough Council acknowledges and supports the Government's aim and objectives for flood and coastal defence (as set out in the following). Our policy and approach will be consistent with them as follows:-

Government's Policy Aim: To reduce the risk to people and the developed and natural environment from flooding and coastal erosion by encouraging the provision of technically, environmentally and economically sound and sustainable defence measures.

Section 3 following sets out our plans for reducing or managing the risk of flooding in the Council's area.

Objective (a): To encourage the provision of adequate and cost effective flood warning systems.

Provisions of flood warning systems is the responsibility of the Environment Agency. However, Stafford Borough Council recognises its related and important role in emergency planning and response. We will therefore:-

- ensure that our emergency response plans include appropriate arrangements for flooding emergencies and that such plans are reviewed, in consultation with the Environment Agency, at least every two years;
- maintain an awareness of the Environment Agency's flood warning dissemination plan for our area and contribute to its implementation as necessary;
- play an agreed role in any flood warning emergency exercises organised by the Environment Agency covering our area.

Objective (b): To encourage the provision of adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound and sustainable flood and coastal defence measures.

Stafford Borough Council will:-

- provide an adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound approach to providing a flood defence service. We will:-
 - adopt a strategic approach to the provision of flood defences, particularly by assessing any potentially wider effects of proposed defences. To this end we will continue to play a full role in Local Environment Agency Plans for our area;
 - aim to provide sustainable flood defences which provide social and/or economic benefits to people whilst taking account of natural processes and which avoid committing future generations to inappropriate defence options;

- ensure work is carried out in accordance with best practice and to deliver best value for money including (a) keeping up to date with policy and technical developments in flood defence, in particular by reference to DEFRA guidance, other Government publications and relevant technical manuals, (b) consulting the Environment Agency on flood defence options to ensure that best practice is adopted and shared, and (c) using appropriately qualified experts to advise on analysis and design of works or programmes of management;
- consider alternative approaches to funding, such as Public Private Partnerships;
- where appropriate seek contributions from developers or other direct beneficiaries or works, in accordance with Planning and Policy Guidance Note 25;
- ensure that appropriate maintenance regimes are in place for flood defences for which the Council accepts responsibility;
- inform landowners of what responsibilities for maintenance rest with them (see paragraph 3.1 following);
- make publicly available the Council's expenditure plans for flood defence maintenance and capital works in the Council's published Environment Portfolio Revenue Estimates and Capital Programme.
- play a positive role in fulfilling our statutory and other responsibilities for furthering nature conservation, including achievement of the Government's environment obligations and targets. In particular we will:-
 - fulfil our responsibilities in relation to nationally and internationally important conservation areas, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and as a competent authority under the terms of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994;
 - when carrying out flood defence works, seek opportunities for environmental enhancement, and aim to avoid damage to environmental interests and to ensure no net loss to habitats covered by Biodiversity Action Plans. We will monitor all losses and gains of such habitats as a result of our carrying out flood defence works and will report on them annually to the Environment Agency;
 - ensure that, for those Water Level Management Plans where we are the lead operating authority, we work in partnership with English Nature to complete, implement and review plans in

accordance with DEFRA guidance on plan completion and the timetables set out in DEFRA High Level Targets.

Objectives (c): To discourage inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding and coastal erosion.

As the Local Planning Authority for our area Stafford Borough Council will take account of flooding risks in all matters relating to development control, including development plans and individual planning applications, in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Notes 20 and 25.

3 OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE RISK OF FLOODING AND COASTAL EROSION IN OUR AREA AND WHAT WE WILL DO TO REDUCE OR MANAGE THAT RISK

Flood and Coastal Defence Responsibilities

- 3.1 Apart from certain obligations to protect internationally important habitats under the EU Habitats Directive, all flood and coastal defence works are undertaken under permissive powers. This means that operating authorities, such as Stafford Borough Council, are not obliged to carry out flood and coastal defence works. It is also important to note that the Council does not normally accept responsibility for maintenance of flood defences on private land; this is the responsibility of the landowner.
- 3.2 Stafford Borough Council is the relevant operating authority for flood defences on ordinary watercourses throughout the Borough except for those in the area of the Sow and Penk Internal Drainage Board.
- 3.3 The flood defences that are owned or managed by the Council are detailed in our return for the database which is maintained by the Environment Agency.
- 3.4 The Environment Agency is the relevant operating authority for flood defences on designated main rivers. Culverts under roads are generally the responsibility of the relevant Highways Authority (Staffordshire County Council or the Highways Agency).

3.5 Assessment of Flood Risk

There are an estimated 500 km of ordinary watercourses in the Borough for which Stafford Borough Council is the operating authority and an estimated 80km of ordinary watercourses for which the Sow and Penk Internal Drainage Board is the operating authority. The following watercourses are designated main river and are the responsibility of the Environment Agency:-

River Trent - throughout Borough

River Sow - Cop Mere to confluence with River Trent

River Penk - Borough Boundary to confluence with River Sow

Scotch Brook - The Mill, Stone to confluence with River Trent

Doley Brook - Doley Common to confluence with Church Eaton Brook

Church Eaton Brook - Confluence with Doley Brook to Borough Boundary

Sandyford Brook - From Astonfields balancing ponds to confluence with River Sow

Meece Brook - Borough Boundary to confluence with River Sow

Rising Brook - A449 to confluence with River Penk

Kingston Brook - Beaconside to confluence with River Sow

River Meece - Aqualate Mere to Borough Boundary

Lonco Brook - Whitleyford Bridge to confluence with River Meece

- 3.6 We have agreed with the Environment Agency that within the Council's area there is 2km approximately of "critical ordinary watercourse" (ie watercourses which are not classified as "main river" but which the Council has agreed with the Environment Agency to be critical because they have the potential to put at risk from flooding large numbers of people and property). The watercourses concerned are Yarnfield Brook and Yarnfield Brook West, between Fieldside and Yarnfield Lane. Aston Lodge Brook between Springwood Drive and Harrow Place and Aston Chase Brook between Farrier Close and Mercer Avenue. Discussions are on going with the Environment Agency to have these critical ordinary watercourses enmained by the 31 March 2006.
- 3.7 Based on historical flooding information, coupled with the Environment Agency's indicative flood plain caps, the Council has carried out an assessment of the risk of flooding from ordinary watercourses in our area. Audmore Road and High Street in the village of Gnosall have previously been subject to flooding caused by inadequately sized culverts under private property since the last policy statement, a scheme has been constructed designed to provide approximately 1 in 100 years protection subject to flooding caused by inadequately sized culverts under private property.

Action to Reduce or Manage Flood Risks

- 3.8 The main means by which flood risks will be managed is through the Environment Agency's flood warning dissemination plan issue date August 2000. This makes arrangements for warnings to be provided in Stafford and Stone within this Council's area, including individual warnings to high risk properties. Stafford Borough Council has included plans for responding to both major and minor flooding in its emergency planning procedures and has arrangements for cascading warnings received from the Environment Agency to relevant Council services.

- 3.9 The Council has a programme in place to inspect all critical ordinary watercourses and flood defences on all ordinary watercourses which will be inspected on a risk based frequency derived from initial inspections carried out by the Environment Agency.
- 3.10 The Council will ensure that regular maintenance is carried out on the flood defences and channels which the Council owns, or for which the Council accepts responsibility, so that they operate at optimum efficiency. Attached as an **ANNEX** is a list of such defences and channels. Where the responsibility for maintenance of flood defences and channels of ordinary watercourses rests with a landowner, the Council will aim to secure co-operation in ensuring appropriate maintenance takes place, drawing on enforcement powers, if necessary and appropriate.
- 3.11 By following Government guidance in Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 on development in flood risk areas, the Council, acting as Local Planning Authority, will ensure that risks are further minimised. This includes measures for ensuring sustainable urban drainage system to control surface water run off where appropriate and economic.

Assessment of Coastal Erosion Risks

- 3.12 Stafford Borough Council is not a coastal authority consequently there is no coastal erosion risk.

4 PARTNERSHIP AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY STATEMENT

- 4.1 The Council has set out its policy and approach to flood and coastal defence. The Council recognises the need to work in partnership with Central Government and other operating authorities. Our local population also has an important part to play in recognising the vital importance of watercourses in controlling flood risk, the need to avoid blockages (whether caused by dumping rubbish or obstructing flows in other ways) and by fulfilling their obligations as riparian owners. The Council asks members of the public to let the Council know of any problems which might increase the risk of flooding.
- 4.2 Stafford Borough Council intends to review this policy statement in five years' time or when there is a material change in circumstances, whichever is the sooner, when it will be revised and reissued as necessary. Meanwhile, the Council welcomes any comments on the approach and policies set out in this statement.

References

1 Strategy for Flood and Coastal Defence in England and Wales DEFRA and Welsh Office, September 1993.

2 New High Level Targets for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management DEFRA, April 2005