

Indicative Flood Zone plain Maps

REVISED DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Environment Agency's Flood Mapping Strategy provides national guidance for flood mapping. The flood map combines the latest flood zones data with information on recent flood defences and the areas that benefit from them. This map replaces the Indicative Floodplain Map (IFM) published by the Environment Agency on the internet.

~~1.1 Indicative Floodplain Maps (IFMs) are prepared by the Environment Agency (EA). The maps provide a general overview of land in natural flood plains which is potentially at risk from flooding from rivers, streams and watercourses and, in coastal areas, from the sea.~~

1.2 The map contained at the back of this document shows the **flood zones** **indicative flood plains** within the Vale but the scale chosen (to fit the format of this document) may not make it easy to identify single properties.

1.3 If you consider your property may be affected or if you have any queries about what this may mean for your property or what you should do to prepare for flooding, then you should contact the Environment Agency, see paragraph 6.5 below.

1.4 You can check the local information and more detailed maps which are available for public inspection at local Environment Agency area offices and through your Local Authority. Paragraph 6.5 gives the contact details.

1.5 Although **flood zones maps** **IFMs** have been prepared by the Environment Agency, the Vale Council also has a role to play. The Council's local plan notes that the Vale has a long frontage to the River Thames as well as much of the River Ock and its tributaries including the Letcombe Brook. It is important that the floodplains of these rivers are protected from the effects of development.

1.6 New development will be closely scrutinised to check if it is likely to flood or cause flooding elsewhere. See comments in Section 5.0 below.

2.0 Background to Flood Mapping

2.1 **National flood mapping has been carried out on behalf of the Environment Agency. The flood zones were issued to this Council in 2004. Indicative flood zone plain maps make it easier for people to find out if their property falls within a flood prone area. Flood mapping cannot be a precise science. Nature is unpredictable and many factors can affect flood risk (such as the pattern or volume of rainfall). This means that flood maps will never be complete or perfect. They can only give a general indication of potential areas at risk. As technology evolves and better information becomes available, the Environment Agency hopes to update and refine the maps. This data aids the implementation of PPG25 (PPS25 when this is issued by government) by planning authorities. It shows, in a map format, the 100 to 1 chance (1%) and the 1000 to 1 chance (0.1% - the 'Extreme Flood Outline') fluvial flood outlines.**

2.2 If your property is shown to be at risk, it is important to find out what this may mean and what preparations you may be able to make.

3.0 What do the maps show?

3.1 The maps show natural river and coastal floodplains in England and Wales. A floodplain is the natural 'overspill' area where a river may rise above its banks and overflow on to adjoining land. The maps provide an indication of probability of flooding, enabling us to share best information and advice on flood risk. The flood map is available to the public on the Internet, see para. 6.5.

3.2 Although the flood plains shown are based on the statistical likelihood of a certain level of flooding occurring every one hundred years, it is important to remember that the risk of a flood occurring is there at all times - this year, next year and future years. Even if you were flooded last year, there is the same chance that you could also be flooded this year.

3.3 The shaded areas on the maps in this document show potential flooding from main rivers. This includes all areas that are estimated to face at least a one per cent chance of flooding each year, ignoring the presence of defences.

4.0 What the Maps do not show?

4.1 The flood zones do not show flood defences and do not cover flooding from other sources such as from burst water mains, road drains, run-off from hillsides, rising flows or sewer overflows. They do not show flood defences or give levels of risk to land or property and do not cover flooding from other sources such as overflows from smaller watercourses not designated as main river or from burst water mains, road drains, run-off from hillsides, rising groundwater flows or sewer overflows etc.

5.0 New Development

5.1 It is important that existing flooding is not made worse. It is therefore important that the floodplains of watercourses are protected from the effects of new development.

5.2 Development will only be permitted if it will not be at risk from flooding and any increased risk of flooding arising from the development can be successfully managed with the minimum environmental effect to ensure the site can be developed and occupied safely. Provision must be made for the long-term maintenance and management of any mitigation measures required. All measures must be agreed before planning permission is granted. See local plan policies DC 13 and DC 14 as set out in Appendix A.

5.3 If flooding is likely to be an issue, it will be necessary for any planning application to be accompanied by an appropriate flood risk assessment. Government guidance on flooding *Development and Flood Risk* (Planning Policy Guidance Note 25) explains the sequential test for development in various categories of flood risk. Failure to submit a flood risk assessment, or demonstrate that the development is acceptable in relation to flood risk, could result in the precautionary principle being used as a reason to refuse a planning application. The guidance in *Development and Flood Risk* will eventually be replaced by Planning Policy Statement 25 once it has been approved.

5.4 It is important, therefore, for applicants to have early discussions with both the Vale Council and the Environment Agency to identify any flood risks and what issues need to be addressed. Where, for example, technical assessments, flood defences,

mitigation measures or on-going maintenance may be required, it will be for the applicant to fund them.

6.0 Other Information

6.1 In preparing the maps, the Environment Agency uses the best information available based on computer models, survey data and historical records. The Environment Agency hopes to update the maps taking new information into account as it becomes available.

6.2 Being in a floodplain does not mean your home or business will definitely be flooded - many other factors come into the equation. The maps are a guide and should prompt people who live in a flood prone area near a river or the sea to be aware and find out what they can do to prepare for flooding.

6.3 Floods are natural occurrences and will always happen. The Environment Agency does all it can to provide river (and sea) defences, where this is feasible, to reduce the risk of flooding. Floods cannot be eliminated so if you live or work in an area prone to flooding it is very important to be aware and to know what to do in the event of a flood.

6.4 Given the general scientific forecast that due to global warming weather patterns may become more unpredictable, in future it is especially important that flood risk is taken more seriously. People in flood risk areas should become more aware of flooding as a potential hazard so that they can be more informed and prepared in case it happens.

6.5 More information can be obtained from:

- Environment Agency's 24 hour FLOODLINE number : 0845 988 1188
- e-mail EA at: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk
- Floodline website www.environment-agency.gov.uk/floodline
- Write to: Environment Agency, Isis House, Howbery Pk, Wallingford, Oxon, OX10 8BD for a free information pack on what to do before during and after a flood along with further information about your local flood warning service, or
- Vale Council, Technical Services, Abbey House, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 3JN telephone no. 01235 520202.

6.6 Additionally, the Council has its own separate policy documents relating to flood prevention; 'Policy Statement on Flood Defence', and 'Enforcement Policy for Clearance of Ordinary Watercourses'. These are held in the Council's Land Drainage Section or alternatively can be viewed on the Council's web-site under 'Environment' and then 'Flooding'.

Appendix A

Reference has been made to policies DC 13 and DC 14. These policies are taken from the second deposit draft of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011. Paragraphs 4.40 – 4.46 of the local plan explain in more detail the background to the policies. For convenience the text of these policies is set out below.

Flood Risk & Water Run-Off

POLICY DC 13

WHERE A RISK FROM FLOODING, NEW DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING THE INTENSIFICATION OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT OR PROPOSALS TO RAISE THE LEVEL OF THE LAND, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS:

- i) AN ADEQUATE ASSESSMENT HAS BEEN MADE OF THAT RISK INCLUDING WHETHER THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD INCREASE THE RISK OF FLOODING ELSEWHERE; AND**
- ii) THE FLOOD RISK TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND ITS POSSIBLE EFFECTS ON FLOOD RISKS ELSEWHERE IN TERMS OF FLOOD FLOWS, FLOOD STORAGE CAPACITY AND RUN-OFF IMPLICATIONS ARE ACCEPTABLE; AND**
- iii) ANY MITIGATION MEASURES PROPOSED TO DEAL WITH THESE EFFECTS AND RISKS ARE ADEQUATE, EFFECTIVE AND ACCEPTABLE AND, AS APPROPRIATE, MAINTAIN OR ENHANCE THE BIODIVERSITY VALUE OF ANY ASSOCIATED LAND.**

WHERE DEVELOPMENT IS PERMITTED UNDER THIS POLICY, ANY ASSOCIATED MITIGATION MEASURES MUST BE IMPLEMENTED BEFORE DEVELOPMENT COMMENCES.

POLICY DC 14

DEVELOPMENT GENERATING SURFACE WATER RUN-OFF LIKELY TO RESULT IN ADVERSE EFFECTS, SUCH AS AN INCREASED RISK OF FLOODING , CHANGES IN GROUND WATER LEVELS, AND RIVER CHANNEL INSTABILITY OR DAMAGE TO HABITATS, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS:

- i) THE DEVELOPMENT'S SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM ACCORDS WITH SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE PRINCIPLES AND HAS BEEN DESIGNED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT LAYOUT; AND**
- ii) THE SYSTEM WILL EFFECTIVELY CONTROL AND ADEQUATELY MITIGATE OR ATTENUATE ANY ADVERSE EFFECTS FROM SURFACE WATER RUN-OFF ON PEOPLE, HABITATS OF ACKNOWLEDGED IMPORTANCE AND PROPERTY.**

WHERE DEVELOPMENT IS PERMITTED UNDER THIS POLICY, THE ASSOCIATED APPROPRIATE ATTENUATION MEASURES MUST BE IN PLACE BEFORE THE DEVELOPMENT COMMENCES.

Flood Zone Map

This map shows the Vale and the general extent of the areas at risk from flooding. However, the scale of the map has been chosen to fit the format of this document. Consequently, it may not be possible to identify single properties. The areas shown on the map are also only at a general level and more information is available on the detailed flood zone maps held by the Environment Agency or the Council.

If you consider your property may be affected or if you have any queries about what this may mean for your property or what you should do to prepare for flooding, then you should contact the Environment Agency or the Council. See paragraph 6.5 of this guidance.