

Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document

Adopted 26 February 2009

**Planning and Housing Strategy
Spelthorne Borough Council
Council Offices
Knowle Green
Staines
TW18 1XB**



DETAILED POLICIES

Flooding

- 5.8 Flooding has implications for the Borough not only in terms of the constraint it places on the location of new development but also as an issue which sits with other 'climate change' related matters. For this reason it is referred to in both Strategic Policies SP1 and SP7. Detailed Policy LO1 on flooding is placed within this section because of its

significant spatial implications. Policy LO1 deals with a wide range of actions to reduce flood risk and is presented in one comprehensive policy to convey clearly the Council's approach.

- 5.9 A significant area of Spelthorne lies in the floodplains of the Thames, Colne (and related river system) and Ash. The only flood defences are very limited and are on parts of the River Colne system and the River Ash.
- 5.10 The Environment Agency Thames Catchment Flood Management Plan (Thames CFMP) (September 2006) confirms the above and sets out some 'main messages':
- a) flood defences cannot be built to protect everything,
 - b) localised defences might be developed,
 - c) the ongoing cycle of development and urban regeneration is a crucial opportunity to manage flood risk,
 - d) land for future flood risk management will be identified and protected by authorities.
- 5.11 The Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), December 2006, assessed all forms of flood risk in the Borough. It concluded that fluvial flooding (from rivers) poses the greatest risk to life and property. The study identified flood risk areas based on the flood zones identified in PPS25 and set out in Table 2. Flood risk was modelled using Environment Agency data. The Agency has subsequently updated its data through the Lower Thames Flood Risk Mapping Study, February 2008 for Zone 3b and Zone 3a flood outlines, and its Flood Map for England and Wales, December 2007, for Zone 2. These outlines are shown on the Proposals Map. The Council will use this data or any subsequent more up to date flood data in applying Policy LO1.
- 5.12 Flood Zone 3 affects over 2800 residential properties and large commercial areas including about half of Staines town centre. Removing the existing flood risk from people and property by relocating development is not a realistic option because of the enormous costs and lack of alternative land outside the flood risk area. A 'sequential' approach of ensuring new development is only in areas not at flood risk would on its own fail to deal with the risks faced by those already living or having businesses in flood risk areas. Rigid adherence to the sequential approach to new development would also not realise the opportunity identified in the Thames CFMP and PPS25 to use development as a way to help manage and reduce flood risk. It would also not ensure that the continuing role of Staines in particular, as a sustainable and accessible location for many facilities including as a major shopping centre, could be fully maintained to meet the needs of local residents.
- 5.13 A comprehensive approach to dealing with flooding and its risks has been followed to avoid adding to the risks to people and property and to seek to reduce the extent of flooding that would otherwise arise from doing nothing. This has included applying the sequential approach in PPS25 which aims to steer new development to Flood Zone 1 unless there are no reasonably available sites in areas of a lower probability of flooding that would be appropriate for the type of development or land use proposed. The approach does not allow residential development within Flood Zone 3 that would put people at risk.
- 5.14 Positive support is given to flood risk management measures. The Environment Agency is currently assessing what measures might be appropriate in its 'Lower Thames Strategy'. These include possible flood alleviation channels and

management/mitigation measures. However, flood channels are unlikely to be implemented until towards the end of the plan period at the earliest and therefore any potential benefits will not be taken into account in decisions on development proposals before full implementation of such works.

- 5.15 The policy also seeks to ensure the capacity of the floodplain is both preserved and, where possible, through appropriate development, increased and impedance to the flow of floodwater is, if possible, reduced. Redevelopment of existing developed sites in flood risk areas for less vulnerable uses will be supported where it achieves a reduction in flood risk through increased flood storage capacity and reduced impedance to flood water flow. The policy takes account of the impact of climate change by not permitting highly vulnerable uses in Flood Zone 2 and requiring any development in this zone to be flood resilient/resistant.
- 5.16 More stringent controls on development are made in Flood Zone 3b (referred to in PPS25 as 'functional floodplain'). These are areas of generally fast flowing floodwater in major flood events where there are particular risks to people and property.
- 5.17 All applications covered by the provisions of the policy will require an appropriate Flood Risk Assessment. This includes in Zone 1 development on sites over 0.5ha, or for 10 dwellings or non-residential development of 1000m² or more because surface water flooding from outside the floodplain can contribute to flood risk.
- 5.18 PPS25 categorises different degrees of flood risk by zones and identifies uses appropriate to each zone by level of vulnerability. Table 2 summarises these details and indicates what will be permitted or precluded from flood risk areas in Spelthorne in line with Policy LO1.

Table 2 Degree of flood risk and appropriate use

Flood Zone	Degree of Flood Risk	Appropriate Uses
Zone 1	Low probability with less than a 1:1000 chance of flooding	No uses precluded on flooding grounds
Zone 2	Medium probability. 1:100 to 1:1000 chance of flooding	'More vulnerable' uses such as housing, 'less vulnerable' uses such as commercial uses and 'water compatible' uses such as open space
Zone 3a	High probability. Greater than 1:100 chance of flooding	'Less vulnerable uses' and 'water compatible uses'
Zone 3b	Greater than 1:20 chance of flooding. Area of fast moving water and referred to as 'functional floodplain'	Only water compatible uses

Policy LO1: Flooding

The Council will seek to reduce flood risk and its adverse effects on people and property in Spelthorne by:

- a) supporting appropriate comprehensive flood risk management measures within or affecting the Borough which are agreed by the Environment Agency,
- b) reducing the risk of flooding from surface water and its contribution to fluvial flooding by requiring all developments of one or more dwellings and all other development over 100m² of floorspace in the Borough to have appropriate sustainable drainage schemes,
- c) maintaining flood storage capacity within Flood Zone 3 by refusing any form of development on undeveloped sites which reduces flood storage capacity or impedes the flow of flood water,
- d) maintaining the effectiveness of the more frequently flooded area (Zone 3b) of the floodplain to both store water and allow the movement of fast flowing water by not permitting any additional development including extensions,
- e) not permitting residential development or change of use or other 'more vulnerable' uses within Zone 3a or 'highly vulnerable uses' within Zone 2 where flood risks cannot be overcome,
- f) supporting the redevelopment of existing developed sites in the urban area in Zones 3a and 3b for 'less vulnerable' uses where:
 - i a minimum increase of flood storage capacity of 20% can be secured (all flood storage areas to be effective at all times throughout the lifetime of the structure/use and do not create unacceptable risks to people in times of flood),
 - ii it reduces impedance to the flow of flood water where there would be flowing flood water,
 - iii appropriate access for the maintenance of water courses is maintained,
 - iv there is no adverse impact on the integrity and effectiveness of flood defence structures.
- g) requiring any development in Zones 2, 3a and 3b to be designed to be flood resilient/resistant,
- h) requiring all development proposals within Zones 2, 3a and 3b, and development outside this area (Zone 1) on sites of 0.5ha or of 10 dwellings or 1000m² of non-residential development or more, to be supported by an appropriate Flood Risk Assessment.