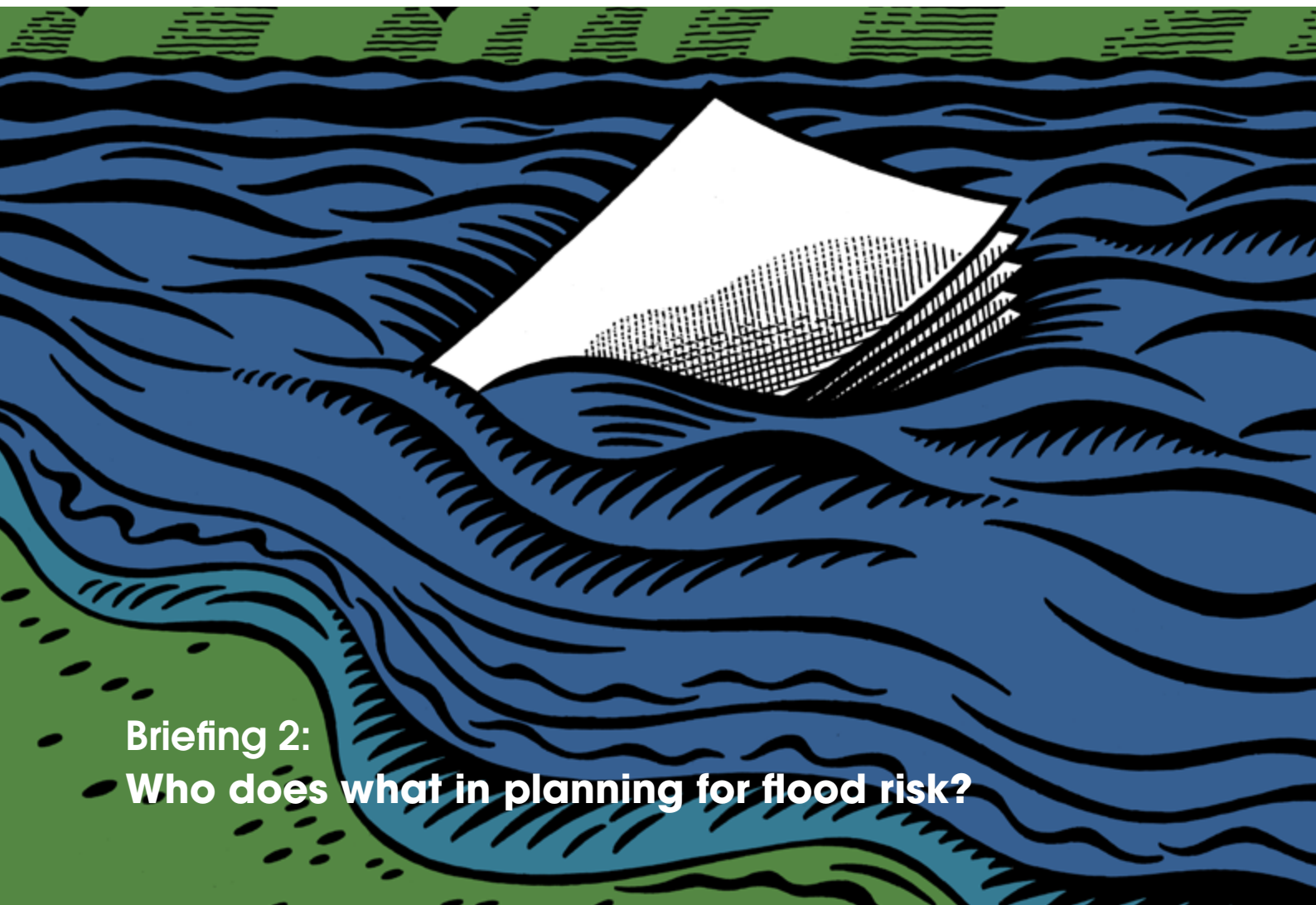


# building a safer future

a guide for communities on navigating the planning system in england to tackle flood risk



**Briefing 2:**  
**Who does what in planning for flood risk?**



Supported by  
**FLOODRE**

## **Building a Safer Future – A Guide for Communities on Navigating the Planning System in England to Tackle Flood Risk. Briefing 2: Who Does What in Planning for Flood Risk?**

© Town and Country Planning Association

December 2021

### **Acknowledgements**

The TCPA is very grateful to the National Flood Forum for substantial input into the drafting of this guidance and to Flood Re for funding and supporting this work – see <https://www.floodre.co.uk/>

# **FLOODRE**



**Town and Country Planning Association  
17 Carlton House Terrace  
London  
SW1Y 5AS**

[www.tcpa.org.uk](http://www.tcpa.org.uk)  
[tcpa@tcpa.org.uk](mailto:tcpa@tcpa.org.uk)

**020 7930 8903**



**The National Flood Forum  
c/o mfg Solicitors LLP  
Adam House  
Birmingham Road  
Kidderminster  
DY10 2SH**

<https://nationalfloodforum.org.uk/>  
[info@floodforum.org.uk](mailto:info@floodforum.org.uk)

**01299 403055**



# Introduction

You are probably reading this because you have experienced flooding at first hand or are worried about flood risk where you live. The risk of flooding is going to increase over the coming decades as a result of climate change, and you certainly do not want any changes made to your local area that could make flooding worse. The planning system in England has a major role in making decisions about where new development will go, and these decisions are crucial to reducing the risk of flooding, both now and in the future.

The future of your community depends on people like you and your neighbours getting involved in the decision-making process, as local communities have unique knowledge of the flood risk in their area, as well as the drive to tackle climate change in order to create a positive future for the next generation.

We hope that this guidance will be a useful starting point to help you get your voice heard when planning decisions that will have an impact on the level of flood risk in your community are made. The guidance takes the reader on a journey through the processes and language used to make decisions within the planning system about flood risk. Both the language and the processes are often not easy to understand, as the system is complex and frequently confusing, but we hope to shed some light on exactly how you can make a real difference in your local area.

The guidance consists of six briefings:

## **Briefing 1: Future flood risk, and how planning can help**

- Introducing flood risk, and planning's role in addressing it
- How communities can influence planning
- Practical solutions to ask for

## **Briefing 2: Who does what in planning for flood risk?**

- Organisations involved and their responsibilities
- When to contact each of these organisations
- Working with your community and local council

## **Briefing 3: Understanding national law and policy on flood risk**

- Flood risk and planning law
- National planning policy on flood risk
- Applying the law and policy to make a difference

## **Briefing 4: Making a difference to your Local Plan**

- The Local Plan-making process
- Influencing your Local Plan
- Other ways to influence planning policy

## **Briefing 5: Making a difference on planning applications**

- The planning application process
- Influencing planning decisions
- Challenging a planning decision

## **Briefing 6: Where to get help – further information and glossary**

- Key resources and contacts for further information
- Forming partnerships and building contacts
- Glossary of technical terms

**A glossary of the technical terms used in this guide is appended to this Briefing. The first use of a glossary term in each briefing appears in bold green text. Clicking on this text will take you to the corresponding entry in the glossary. Clickable links to external sources of information are set in bold dark red type.**

# Briefing 2

## Who does what in planning for flood risk?

*'Community members have an important role in the planning system. Your knowledge and evidence of localised flooding and drainage problems can help to inform local planning authority decisions on how development is located and designed. You may also have great ideas about how local development or regeneration could help to reduce the causes and impacts of flood risk overall, such as by delivering new flood defences, making space for flood water or naturalising rivers. Your involvement can help to ensure that the development that your area needs is delivered in a sustainable and climate-resilient way. It may also help you to understand which other organisations have a role in managing flood risk in your area, so that you can have your say in how this is done.'*

Sam Kipling

Flood and Coastal Risk Management Senior Adviser, Environment Agency

There are many different official organisations that have an influence on dealing with **flood risk**, and there are gaps and overlaps that can be confusing and off-putting. An understanding of what each organisation does will help you to focus your energy in the best way, and will improve your chances of positively influencing planning decisions.

The key organisation in planning is the **Local Planning Authority (LPA)**. Local Planning Authorities take the final decision on **planning applications** and produce **Local Plans** to set local **policies** and allocate land for **development**. In many cases, Local Planning Authorities must seek expert advice from organisations such as the **Environment Agency** or the **Lead Local Flood Authority**. In making decisions, Local Planning Authorities must consider representations received from such organisations, as well as from members of the public like you.

The source of the flood risk also impacts which organisations have a role in dealing with it. For example, the Environment Agency has oversight of the management of all sources of flooding and **coastal erosion** but is **directly responsible** only for managing the risk of flooding from **main rivers**, reservoirs, estuaries, and the sea. Management of the risk of flooding from **surface water**, **groundwater** and **ordinary watercourses** is the responsibility of Lead Local Flood Authorities.

### Organisations that play a part in managing flood risk

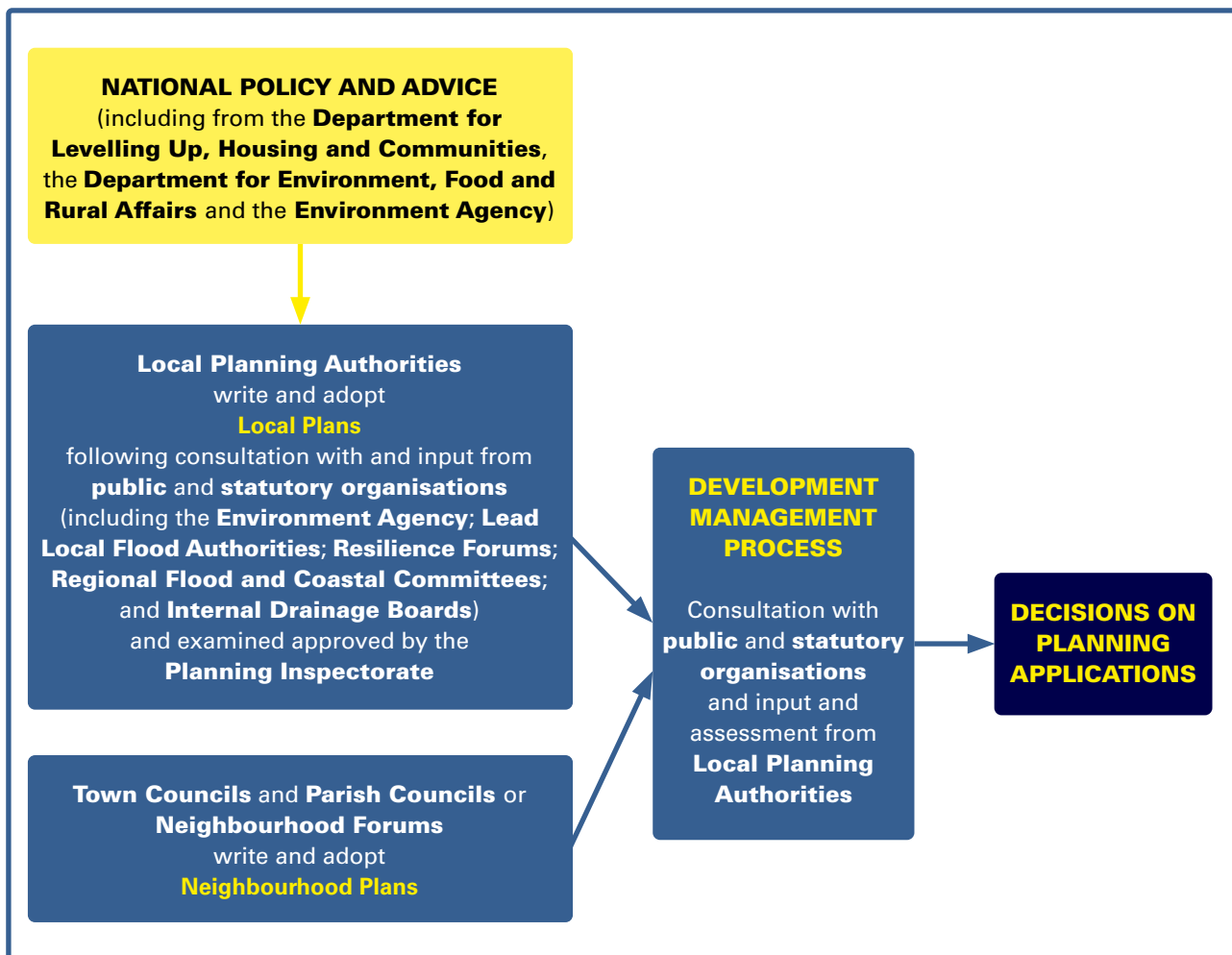
The diagram on the next page gives a sense of how many fingers are in this pie. It shows the key organisations that have a role in making planning decisions with a bearing on flood risk. Their roles are summarised below.

#### **National government and agencies**

- **National government:** The Westminster government sets national policy for dealing with flood risk. The key departments to be aware of are the **Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)** and the **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)**.
- **Environment Agency:** The Environment Agency advises on the adequacy of **Strategic Flood Risk Assessments** and some **site-specific flood risk assessments**, and on the appropriateness of any development proposed. The Environment Agency also produces and makes freely available a lot of information on flood risk to inform flood risk assessments.

#### **Local government and formal flood risk bodies**

- **Lead Local Flood Authorities:** Lead Local Flood Authorities are **County Councils** or **Unitary Authorities**. The relevant teams of



Organisations involved in the process of making decisions on planning applications

officers there provide advice on how developments should manage surface water drainage and use **sustainable drainage systems**. They may also advise on the management of flood risk from groundwater and surface water. They are required to comment on all planning applications for **major development** with regard to flood risk from 'local' sources of flooding, such as surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses. Each Lead Local Flood Authority produces a **Flood Risk Management Strategy**, the purpose of which is to assess the local flood risk, set out objectives for managing local flooding, outline the costs and benefits of measures proposed to meet these objectives, and set out how the measures will be paid for.

- **Local Planning Authorities:** The Local Planning Authority (which is usually the **District Council** or Unitary Authority, but in some areas is the National Park Authority) is responsible for drawing up the Local Plan, which is the plan for future development in the local area. As part of this process, Local Planning Authorities are required to assess flood risk through a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. For further information, see Briefing 4. Local

### Top tip

You can find out who your Lead Local Flood Authority is by visiting the Government's long-term flood risk website [here](#). If you phone your flood risk authority council, you should say that you wish to talk to the Lead Local Flood Authority or the drainage team.

Planning Authorities also have a **development management** function, assessing individual planning applications to decide whether to grant **planning permission**. As part of this process, applicants are required to assess flood risk through their site-specific flood risk assessments. For further information, see Briefing 5.

- **Other Risk Management Authorities:** District and **London Borough Councils** and Highways Authorities are examples of other **Risk Management Authorities** and are thus key partners in planning for local flood risk management. They:
  - can carry out flood risk management works on minor watercourses (outside of **Internal Drainage Board** areas); and



- work in partnership with Lead Local Flood Authorities and other Risk Management Authorities to ensure that risks are managed effectively, including in decision-making on development in their area.
- **Coastal Protection Authorities:** District and Unitary Authorities in coastal areas are **Coastal Protection Authorities**. They work with the Environment Agency and other relevant bodies to produce **Shoreline Management Plans**, which identify the most sustainable approach to management of the flood and coastal erosion risks to the coastline in the short, medium and long term.
- **Internal Drainage Boards:** Internal Drainage Boards have an important role to play in flood risk management and in creating and managing natural habitats. Each Internal Drainage Board operates within a defined area, known as a drainage district. They are made up of elected members, who represent land occupiers, and others nominated by local authorities, who represent the public and other interest groups.
- **Parish and Town Councils:** **Parish Councils** and **Town Councils** should work with local residents to prepare community flood plans,

raising additional funding for local flood **resilience** and **flood defence** measures and gathering information on flooding by reporting any flood incidents in their area. They can also undertake maintenance works on ponds, ditches and other open drainage in order to prevent such features from becoming a risk to health.

### **Private sector companies**

- **Water and sewerage companies:** Water and sewerage companies are responsible for managing the risks of flooding from piped water and foul or combined sewer systems that provide drainage from buildings and yards.
- **Developers:** **Developers** are required to provide a flood risk assessment when submitting a planning application for development in or affecting a flood risk area. They must provide all the required information about the level of flood risk associated with a site when submitting a planning application. If planning permission is granted they must then deliver the flood risk alleviation measures required as a condition of the grant of permission.

## **When to contact particular organisations**

### **National government**

- Respond to consultations and calls for evidence.
- Contact your local MP about concerns that you have in your local area.

### **Environment Agency**

- Respond to consultations on flood risk management plans, which set out how risks from main rivers, the sea and reservoirs will be managed. The plans must focus on communities and partnership working. Plans are often produced jointly with Lead Local Flood Authorities.

### **Lead Local Flood Authorities**

- You can get involved in the local flood risk management co-ordinated by the Lead Local Flood Authority. Such involvement might include learning about how flood risk is managed elsewhere, or becoming a community volunteer to raise awareness of flood risk in the community. It is useful to build a good relationship with your Lead Local Flood Authority, and the best way to do this is through a Flood Action Group.
- Respond to consultations on the local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

### **Local Planning Authorities**

- Respond to consultations on the Local Plan and supporting documents such as Strategic Flood Risk Assessments.
- Respond to consultations on the Local Plan.
- Respond to consultations on planning applications.
- When preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Water and sewerage companies**

- Report leaks.
- Provide input into drainage and wastewater management plans.



Sustainable urban drainage system associated with a new housing development

## The benefits of community partnerships and collaboration

Reaching a consensus about what your community might want can be like herding cats, but it is vital to try to involve as many people as possible – and particularly those who, like ethnic minorities or children, do not always get a voice, or those at particular risk when flooding occurs, such as people with long-term health conditions or mobility challenges. If you collaborate with neighbours, your collective voice will be stronger and therefore more likely to have an influence. Establishing a Flood Action Group is a good way to ensure a co-ordinated and organised response that draws together the views of a wide range of people.

## Working with your local council

Decisions about planning are made by your local council (also known as the Local Planning Authority). **Planning officers** (staff members employed by the council) and elected **councillors** who serve on the council's **planning committee** have different roles in the planning process. Officers develop the Local Plan (i.e. write planning policy) and process planning applications. They make recommendations on whether or not to approve planning applications, but it is usually your elected councillors who make the final decision. They can decide not to follow the recommendations of officers, but they must have good reasons for doing so – something more than just 'I don't like it'.

The most important source of advice for local planners on dealing with flood risk comes from the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authorities.

Local Planning Authorities draw up the Local Plan for their area and then decide whether to grant planning permission for individual applications based on the policy in the Local Plan. These responsibilities mean that the best chance you have of securing changes for your local area is by engaging positively with your local council. To make a real difference, you need to understand the proposals and have as much evidence as possible to back up your case.

Try to be supportive of your local planners and have a balanced discussion. It is better to suggest alternatives to a proposal rather than refusing to engage with any change proposed or occurring in your local area.

It is worth remembering that Local Planning Authorities face pressure to meet targets on the delivery of new housing and are often very under-resourced – this may limit the actions that they can take. For example, councils are required by national government to provide land for a certain number of new homes over the next five to ten years. Failure to demonstrate that this land is available gives developers greater freedom to build where they want and a Local Planning Authority has less control over the location of new development, risking development in ill-suited locations.

# Glossary

## **25 Year Environment Plan**

Strategy document, published in 2018, setting out the UK government's plan for improving the natural environment over a 25-year period – available [here](#). It includes actions aimed at creating better habitats for wildlife, improving air and water quality, and reducing the amount of plastic in the ocean.

## **Canalisation**

The straightening, deepening and widening of a natural river channel to increase flow capacity so that flood water is carried away more quickly. However, it may increase **flood risk** further downstream and can also have a negative impact on river ecosystems.

## **Change of use**

The conversion of a building from one type of use to another, for example from a commercial use to residential use. Until very recently, change of use usually required **planning permission**.

## **Climate change**

The long-term change in weather due to human activity. Global temperatures are continuing to increase, and extreme weather events are becoming more common.

## **Climate Change Act 2008**

UK legislation that includes a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050.

## **Climate change allowances**

Predictions of anticipated change in peak river flow, peak rainfall intensity and sea level rise caused by future **climate change**. **Local Planning Authorities** must consider local climate change allowances when preparing **Strategic Flood Risk Assessments**. Climate change allowances are also known as flood risk allowances.

## **Climate Change Committee**

Independent organisation that advises the UK government on how the nation should reduce greenhouse emissions and cope with the impacts of **climate change** – see [here](#).

## **Coastal erosion**

The loss of land along the coast due to the action of waves, tides, currents, and wind-driven sea water over time. Over a long period it is possible that homes and even whole villages will fall into the sea as the land retreats.

## **Coastal flooding**

Seawater flooding of an area of land on the coast, often caused by a severe storm which forces excessive quantities of sea water onto the land.

## **Coastal Protection Authority**

**District** and **Unitary Authorities** in coastal areas are designated as Coastal Protection Authorities. They have the responsibility of co-ordinating **coastal erosion** risk management activities in their area, including drawing up a **Shoreline Management Plan**.



### **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

A charge that local authorities can require **developers** to pay as part of granting **planning permission** for new development. It is used to pay for the improvements to local infrastructure needed to support the increase in population and other impacts of new development. Further information is available [here](#).

### **Consultation (or Public consultation)**

The process through which a public body, such as the government or a local authority, invites members of the public to give their opinion on proposals that are likely to affect their lives – such as a draft **Local Plan**.

### **Councillor**

An elected member of a council.

### **County Council**

A form of elected local government for a county area, responsible for functions such as education, but also minerals and waste planning.

### **Culvert**

A man-made structure that allows water to flow underneath a road, footpath, or railway line. Culverts can become blocked by debris, which may cause flooding.

### **Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)**

The UK government department responsible for housing, communities and local government in England (formerly known as the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government).

### **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)**

The UK government department responsible for safeguarding the natural environment, supporting the food and farming industry, and supporting the rural economy.

### **Design code**

A set of rules dictating what a new **development** should look like.

### **Developer/property developer**

A company that purchases land to be used for new development, such as housing and, usually, undertakes the building of (for example) houses and the development of other infrastructure.

### **Development**

Building on or carrying out other industrial activities on an area of land. In the **planning system**, it most often refers to the building of new homes.

### **Development control (or Development management)**

The process of approving or rejecting applications for **planning permission**.

### **District Council**

A form of elected local government for a rural or urban district, with local planning among its responsibilities (some district-level councils are formally named borough councils or city councils).

### **Environment Agency**

Public body with oversight of the management of all sources of flooding and **coastal erosion** – although it is directly responsible only for managing the risk of flooding from **main rivers**, reservoirs, estuaries, and the sea. It advises on **Strategic Flood Risk Assessments** and **site-specific flood risk assessments**, and on the appropriateness of a proposed **development**.

### **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**

The process of collecting information about the impact a proposed **development** on the environment. The results are considered by the **Local Planning Authority** when deciding whether to grant **planning permission**.

### **Examination (or Public Examination)**

Meeting held to assess whether a **Local Plan** follows national law, **policy**, and procedure. It is run by the **Planning Inspectorate** and provides an opportunity for members of the public to voice concerns about draft planning policies and suggest amendments, based on evidence.

### **Exception Test**

A test undertaken as part of the process of granting **planning permission** in an area at risk of flooding. If the **Sequential Test** shows that it is not possible to develop in a lower-risk area, the Exception Test is used to assess whether the wider benefits of building in a location with higher risk outweigh the disbenefits from the **flood risk**.

### **Flash flooding**

Rapid flooding of low-lying areas. It may be caused by heavy rainfall or by meltwater from heavy snow or ice. The impact is usually worse in built-up areas, where there are fewer permeable surfaces for the flood water to drain away.

### **Flood Action Group (FAG)**

A group formed by people living within a community threatened by the risk of flooding. Flood Action Groups act as a representative voice for their wider community when working with their **Local Planning Authority** and in influencing the **planning system** on matters concerning local **flood risk**.

### **Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England**

A document (issued in 2020) setting out what needs to be done by all Risk Management Authorities involved in flood and coastal erosion risk management in England – see [here](#).

### **Flood and Water Management Act 2010**

UK legislation introduced to improve the nation's approach to the management of **flood risk** and **coastal erosion**. Further information is available [here](#).

### **Flood defences**

Structures designed to prevent flooding or control flood water in order to minimise the harm to people and property.

### **Floodplain**

A flat, low-lying area next to a body or bodies of water prone to flooding.

### **Flood risk**

The combination of the likelihood of a flood event occurring and the impact that the flood would have if it did occur.

### **Flood Risk Management Strategy**

A document produced by the **Lead Local Flood Authority** which assesses **flood risk** for the whole area, sets objectives for the management of flood risk, outlines the responsibilities of **Risk Management Authorities**, lists the costs and benefits of measures proposed to meet the objectives, and sets out how these measures will be funded.

### **Flood Zone**

A system of four Flood Zones – called 1, 2, 3a, and 3b – is used to indicate the probability of **flood risk**, ignoring the presence of any flood defence. Areas in Flood Zone 1 are least likely to flood, with areas in Flood Zone 3 most likely. A map on the **Environment Agency's** website indicates the Flood Zone in which a property is located – available [here](#). Flood Zones do not take into account flood risk from sewers, ground or surface water, or reservoirs.

### **Fluvial flooding**

Flooding caused when the water level in a river, ditch or stream overflows.

## **Groundwater flooding**

Flooding caused by a rise in the level of underground water (known as the water table) to above ground level, as a result of prolonged or heavy rainfall. Groundwater flooding tends to happen gradually and can last much longer than other types of flooding as the water cannot drain into the saturated ground.

## **Internal Drainage Board**

An authority established in areas of special drainage need in England and Wales, with powers to improve water level management in their particular area, known as an internal drainage district.

## **Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)**

An area's Lead Local Flood Authority is either the **County Council** or the **Unitary Authority**. Lead Local Flood Authorities are responsible for providing advice on how **developments** manage surface water drainage and use **sustainable drainage systems**, and on the management of **flood risk** from **groundwater** and **surface water**. They are required to comment on all major **planning applications** with regard to flood risk from 'local' sources of flooding, such as surface water, groundwater, and **ordinary watercourses**.

## **Local Plan**

The plan for future development in your local area, prepared by the **Local Planning Authority**. It includes maps of where new housing, other **development** and infrastructure are to go, and also contains **policies** prescribing the sort of things that can and cannot be built and rules on the quality of anything that is built. A **planning application** will be accepted much more easily if it is in line with the Local Plan. But **planning permission** can be given to proposals in areas not allocated in the plan if a substantial case is made. Further information is available **here**.

## **Local Planning Authority (LPA)**

The council (or National Park Authority in some cases) that carries out planning functions for your local area. In areas where there is both a **County Council** and a **District Council**, it is the District Council that prepares the **Local Plan**.

## **London Borough Council**

The Local Planning Authority for the London boroughs.

## **Main river**

Main rivers are the main watercourses shown on the statutory main river maps drawn up by the **Environment Agency** and the **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**.

## **Major development**

For residential development, any **development** consisting of ten or more residential units.

## **Material consideration**

A planning term for something that should be taken into account when deciding whether to grant **planning permission** – such as the risk of flooding. Almost anything that relates to **development** or the use of land is capable of being a material consideration, but it will need to relate to the **National Planning Policy Framework** or **Planning Practice Guidance** to be taken seriously.

## **Minor development**

For residential development, any **development** consisting of nine or fewer residential units.

## **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

Document setting out the government's planning policies in England, and outlining how they should be applied. The NPPF must be taken into account by the **Local Planning Authority** when drawing up a **Local Plan** and in making decisions on **planning applications**. The NPPF is available **here**.

### **Natural flood management**

The use of natural processes to minimise the impact of flood events. Examples include restoring bends in rivers to allow more water to be carried, and changing the way that land is managed so that the soil can absorb more water.

### **Neighbourhood Forum**

A body formed either by a **Town Council** or a **Parish Council** (where one exists) or by local people for the purpose of producing a **Neighbourhood Plan**.

### **Neighbourhood Plan**

A document produced by the local community, as represented by a **Neighbourhood Forum**, which sets out planning **policies** for a local area and is used by the **Local Planning Authority** when deciding whether to approve or deny a **planning application**.

### **Ombudsman**

An independent official appointed to investigate complaints by members of the public against a company or an organisation.

### **Ordinary watercourse**

Any watercourse not designated as a **main river**.

### **Parish Council**

A form of local government – not present in all locations – based on civil parishes and with varying but limited powers. Parish Councils and **Town Councils** form the lowest tier of local government in the UK.

### **Permission in principle**

Certain types of land (such as brownfield land) can be granted **planning permission** in principle, where the concept of **development** on that site is pre-approved but the details are not confirmed. Before starting to build on this land, **developers** have to submit to the **Local Planning Authority** limited details of what they intend to do.

### **Permitted development rights (PDR)**

Certain changes to a building can be made without the need to apply for **planning permission**, under what are termed permitted development rights, although, in most cases, the risk of flooding must still be taken into account.

### **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004**

A key piece of UK legislation within the planning system and on the compulsory purchase of land. It is of particular relevance as it places a legal duty on local authorities to address climate change.

### **Planning appeal**

The process through which a **developer** or individual making a **planning application** can appeal against a planning decision, including the decision by a **Local Planning Authority** to reject the application. In England, appeals are processed and decided by the **Planning Inspectorate**.

### **Planning application**

A document (physical or electronic) completed by a person, a group of people or an organisation to request permission from the **Local Planning Authority** to build something new or make a change to an existing building or structure.

### **Planning committee**

A panel of local **councillors** at a **Local Planning Authority** who consider each **planning application** and vote on whether to grant **planning permission**.

### **Planning condition**

Rather than refusing a **planning application**, a **Local Planning Authority** can grant **planning permission**, but with conditions that must be met by the **developer**.



### **Planning Inspector**

A planning expert employed by the **Planning Inspectorate** to provide independent scrutiny of plans (such as **Local Plans**) before they can be adopted. Planning Inspectors also preside over **Examinations** of plans and decisions, and **planning appeals** on and inquiries into decisions that have been made.

### **Planning Inspectorate (PINS)**

The national government agency responsible for **planning appeals**, national infrastructure **planning applications** and the **examination** and approval of **Local Plans**.

### **Planning officer**

A planning professional employed by a **Local Planning Authority** to process (and for certain types of application decide on the outcomes of) **planning applications** and develop planning **policy** and **Local Plans**.

### **Planning permission**

Formal permission from a **Local Planning Authority** for either a new **development** or a change to an existing building.

### **Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)**

National guidance on various topics of relevance to the **planning system**, including **climate change** and **flood risk**. It is intended to be read alongside the **National Planning Policy Framework** and must be considered by planners when preparing the **Local Plan** and in decision-making on **planning applications**. The full Planning Practice Guidance set is available **here**.

### **Planning system**

The set of processes which together are intended to ensure that **development** happens in the right place and at the right time, to the benefit of people, the economy, and the environment. These processes are multiple, complex, and carried out by a number of different organisations – mostly public bodies.

### **Policy**

A set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that have/has been officially established by national or local government.

### **Prior approval**

A condition of certain types of **permitted development** is the submission of a **planning application** to the **Local Planning Authority** for its 'prior approval'. This process allows the Local Planning Authority to consider the proposal with regard to certain, pre-defined factors.

### **Public hearing**

A formal meeting to hear community viewpoints, held as part of the process of drawing up a **Local Plan**.

### **Regional Flood and Coastal Committee**

There are 12 Regional Flood and Coastal Committees in England. They work with the **Environment Agency** and other partners to understand local issues better.

### **Resilience**

The capacity to withstand or recover from a disaster or emergency such as flooding.

### **Resilience Forum**

A local partnership consisting of representatives from local public services, including the emergency services, local authorities, the NHS, the **Environment Agency**, and others. Resilience forums plan and prepare for incidents and emergencies. They identify risks and produce emergency plans to either prevent or mitigate the impact of any incident on their local communities.

### **Risk Management Authorities (RMAs)**

Public bodies, including the **Environment Agency** and **Lead Local Flood Authorities**, who work with communities to manage the risk of flooding from rivers, the sea, surface water, groundwater, and reservoirs.

### **Secretary of State**

A senior Minister who is head of a UK government department.

### **Secretary of State call-in**

The **Secretary of State** for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has the power 'call in' any **planning application** to decide the outcome on behalf of the **Local Planning Authority**. The Secretary of State can call in a planning application for any reason – however, such instances usually relate to applications considered to be of national significance.

### **Sequential Test**

A planning test comparing a proposed **development** site with other available sites to determine which has the lowest **flood risk** and to explore whether development could be steered to lower-risk areas.

### **Sewer flooding**

Flooding occurring when sewage or water leaks from a sewerage system or rises above ground level through drainage systems, toilets, sinks, or showers.

### **Shoreline Management Plan (SMP)**

A document assessing the risks associated with coastal processes over a large area, and setting a framework to address these risks and manage the shoreline in ways that reduce the risks to people and the environment.

### **Site-specific flood risk assessment**

An assessment of **flood risk** on and resulting from a **development** site, carried out either by or on behalf of a **developer** as part of a **planning application**. The **Local Planning Authority** receiving the planning application uses the assessment to help determine whether to grant or deny **planning permission**.

### **Statutory consultee**

An organisation that must be consulted and provide a substantive response to a **Local Planning Authority** concerning a **planning application**, prior to a final decision being made.

### **Storm surge**

A change in sea level caused by a storm. It can lead to extensive flooding and poses danger to people living in coastal areas. The main causes of a storm surge are low pressure and high winds – high winds push the seawater towards the coast, causing it to pile up there, and low pressure at the centre of the storm can also 'pull' the water up. Strong winds in the storm can also generate large waves on top of the surge, which can cause damage to sea defences or spill over their tops, adding to the **flood risk**.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

The process of collecting information about the environmental impact of the **policies** included in a draft **Local Plan**. It is undertaken at the plan-making stage.

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

The process of collecting information about the risk to an area from flooding from all sources, now and in the future, taking account of the impacts of **climate change**. It assesses the impact that land use changes and **development** in the area will have on **flood risk**. **Environment Agency** guidance on producing a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is available [here](#).

### **Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

A document produced by a **Local Planning Authority** providing further information for **developers** on how policies detailed in the **Local Plan** are to be implemented.

### **Surface water flooding**

Surface water flooding occurs when water that has fallen onto the ground flows over impermeable surfaces, or accumulates in low spots, and the capacity of drainage systems is exceeded. It is very difficult to predict, as it is usually caused by very localised, intense storms which overwhelm surface water sewers and drainage systems. These **flash floods** typically occur and then disappear in a short space of time, but they can still be devastating if they get into our homes. The risk of surface water flooding can be exacerbated by sealing previously permeable surfaces (paving over gardens and other green spaces, for example), with the result that water can no longer soak away into the ground.

### **Sustainable drainage system (SuDS)**

A drainage system in which water does not flow directly into the sewer network. Instead, water is stored locally, thus reducing the risk of **surface water flooding**. High-quality SuDS schemes include trees and/or other vegetation and provide other landscape and amenity benefits for local communities, but sometimes schemes referred to as a SuDS are just a concrete storage tank underneath a car park.

### **Town Council**

A form of local government – not present in all locations – for small municipalities, operating with varying but limited powers. **Parish Councils** and Town Councils form the lowest tier of local government.

### **Unitary Authority**

A form of elected local government responsible for providing all local government services for that area.

### **Viability test**

A test carried out during the **planning application** process to determine whether it is viable for **developers** to deliver the other measures requested by the **Local Planning Authority** alongside the proposed **development**. It has been widely criticised for allowing landowners and developers to claim to be unable to contribute towards infrastructure costs and affordable housing, thus undermining **policy** requirements and maximising land value and profits at the expense of local communities.



**tcpa**

**Town and Country Planning Association  
17 Carlton House Terrace  
London  
SW1Y 5AS**

**[www.tcpa.org.uk](http://www.tcpa.org.uk)  
[tcpa@tcpa.org.uk](mailto:tcpa@tcpa.org.uk)  
020 7930 8903**



**The National Flood Forum  
c/o mfg Solicitors LLP  
Adam House  
Birmingham Road  
Kidderminster  
DY10 2SH**

**<https://nationalfloodforum.org.uk/>  
[info@floodforum.org.uk](mailto:info@floodforum.org.uk)  
01299 403055**