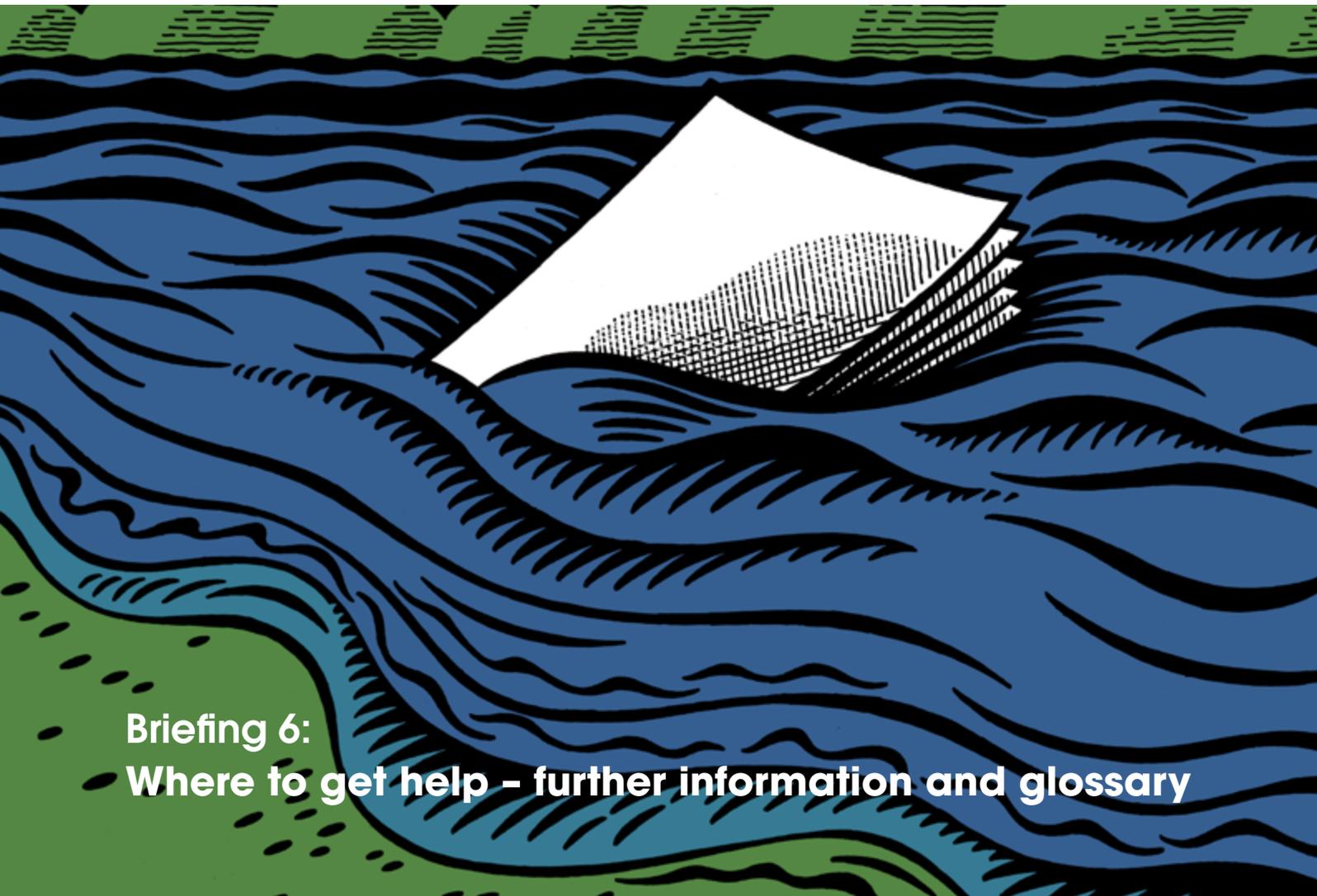


# building a safer future

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



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



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**FLOODRE**

**Building a Safer Future – A Guide for Communities on Navigating the Planning System in England to Tackle Flood Risk. Briefing 6: Where to Get Help – Further Information and Glossary**

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# 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**

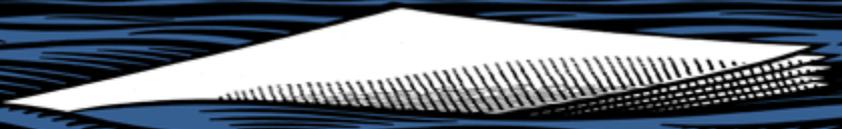
- The planning application process
- Influencing planning decisions
- Challenging a planning decision

## **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 6



## Where to get help – further information and glossary

This guide provides an introduction to using the **planning system** to reduce **flood risk**. The system is complex – but the good news is that there are many organisations you can contact and resources you can access to help you and your community to plan and prepare effectively for flood risk. Some useful places to begin are listed here.

### Planning advice - organisations

Organisation	How can they help?	Web link
<b>Planning Aid England</b>	Planning Aid England can provide planning advice on a particular issue in your local area (England only).	<a href="https://planningaid.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/requests/new">https://planningaid.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/requests/new</a>
<b>Planning Aid for London</b>	Planning Aid for London can provide planning advice on a particular issue in your local area (London only).	<a href="https://planningaidforlondon.org.uk/contact/">https://planningaidforlondon.org.uk/contact/</a>
<b>Friends of the Earth</b>	Friends of the Earth employ legal specialists on both town planning and the environment who can help you to get hold of environmental information, take part in processes within the planning system, and use the law to protect the environment and public health.	<a href="https://friendsoftheearth.uk/legal-and-planning">https://friendsoftheearth.uk/legal-and-planning</a>
	Friends of the Earth have published some useful guidance on your rights in planning which explains how you can have a say on decisions in your local area.	<a href="https://friendsoftheearth.uk/system-change/guide-community-rights-environment-and-planning-laws">https://friendsoftheearth.uk/system-change/guide-community-rights-environment-and-planning-laws</a>

### Planning advice - resources

Resource	How can it help?	Web link
<b><i>Tools for Local Water Participation</i></b>	The online toolkit can help you to involve other local residents in your campaign to manage flood risk in your local area.	<a href="https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/learn/tools-for-local-water-participation/">https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/learn/tools-for-local-water-participation/</a>

## Support for dealing with flooding and flood risk – organisations

Organisation	How can they help?	Web link
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)	A <b>Defra</b> webpage provides information on what to do to prepare if you expect to be flooded.	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding">https://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding</a>
Environment Agency	The <b>Environment Agency's</b> flood information service can be used to find out if you live in an area at risk of flooding; to sign up to receive flood warnings; and to learn what you can do to prepare for a flood event.	<a href="https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/plan-ahead-for-flooding">https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/plan-ahead-for-flooding</a>
	The Environment Agency's flood maps show the latest information on the long-term flood risk in your local area.	<a href="https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/">https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/</a>
National Flood Forum	The National Flood Forum can help communities to reduce the flood risk in their local area.	<a href="https://nationalfloodforum.org.uk/">https://nationalfloodforum.org.uk/</a>
	The National Flood Forum website hosts a lot of information about managing flood risk, including useful guidance on <b>sustainable drainage systems</b> in <b>developments</b> .	<a href="https://nationalfloodforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Simple-SuDS-28th-July-2019-V1.pdf">https://nationalfloodforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Simple-SuDS-28th-July-2019-V1.pdf</a>
British Red Cross	The Red Cross can help you to take steps to prepare yourself and your property before, during and after a flood.	<a href="https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/how-to-prepare-for-floods-and-flooding">https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/how-to-prepare-for-floods-and-flooding</a>
Age UK	Age UK provides information on how to work out if you live in an area at risk of flooding, how you can prepare for a flood, and what help is available in the event of a flood.	<a href="https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/care/housing-options/home-safety/preparing-for-flooding/">https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/care/housing-options/home-safety/preparing-for-flooding/</a>
Property Care Association	The Property Care Association provides guidance on how you can protect your home from flooding – from how to find out if your home is at risk of flooding, to which types of building products to use to improve the <b>resilience</b> of your home to flooding events.	<a href="https://www.property-care.org/homeowners/flood-protection/flood-protection-and-your-property/">https://www.property-care.org/homeowners/flood-protection/flood-protection-and-your-property/</a>

## Support for dealing with flooding and flood risk – resources

Resource	How can it help?	Web link
<b><i>An Introduction to Natural Flood Management Techniques</i></b>	West Wolds Slow the Flow has produced a guide on the various <b>natural flood management</b> techniques that communities can use to manage the flow of water to prevent flooding.	<a href="https://www.westwoldsslowtheflow.org.uk/">https://www.westwoldsslowtheflow.org.uk/</a>
<b><i>Flood Toolkit</i></b>	West Northamptonshire Council has produced a toolkit to help homeowners and communities to reduce the impacts of flooding in their area.	<a href="https://www.floodtoolkit.com/">https://www.floodtoolkit.com/</a>
<b><i>Homeowners Guide to Property Flood Resilience</i></b>	The Know Your Flood Risk campaign has published guidance to help you find out if your home is at risk of flooding and on how to protect your home from flooding, including making the most of sustainable drainage solutions.	<a href="https://www.landmark.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/FloodGuide_ForHomeowners.pdf">https://www.landmark.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/FloodGuide_ForHomeowners.pdf</a>

## Support for community action – funding

You may be able to apply for funding to support your community group, pay for expert planning advice, or implement a flood risk reduction scheme in your local area.

Organisation	How can they help?	Web link
<b>Asda Foundation</b>	The ASDA Foundation provides grants to grass-roots organisations.	<a href="http://www.asdafoundation.org/foundation-grants">http://www.asdafoundation.org/foundation-grants</a>
<b>National Lottery Community Fund</b>	The National Lottery Community Fund supports a variety of community activities.	<a href="https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/thinking-of-applying-for-funding/projects-we-fund">https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/thinking-of-applying-for-funding/projects-we-fund</a>
<b>Spacehive</b>	Spacehive is a funding platform for community projects.	<a href="https://www.spacehive.com/">https://www.spacehive.com/</a>
<b>Tesco Community Grants</b>	Tesco Community Grants support local community projects across the UK.	<a href="https://tescocommunitygrants.org.uk/">https://tescocommunitygrants.org.uk/</a>
<b>UK Community Foundations</b>	The UK's network of community foundations provides grant funding according to the needs of a particular area.	<a href="https://www.ukcommunityfoundations.org/">https://www.ukcommunityfoundations.org/</a>

## Support for community action - advice

Organisation	How can they help?	Web link
<b>Association of British Insurers (ABI)</b>	The Association of British Insurers has produced <i>Responding to Major Floods</i> , a guide for householders on how to minimise the potential impact from flooding and the steps to take to successfully claim insurance in the event of a flood.	<a href="https://www.abi.org.uk/globalassets/files/subject/public/flooding/abi_bro4120_major_floods_2017_v7-web.pdf">https://www.abi.org.uk/globalassets/files/subject/public/flooding/abi_bro4120_major_floods_2017_v7-web.pdf</a>
<b>British Insurance Brokers' Association (BIBA)</b>	The British Insurance Brokers' Association provides advice for householders who are either directly affected by flooding or who live in an area prone to flooding.	<a href="https://www.biba.org.uk/insurance-guides/weather-insurance-guides/flood-insurance/">https://www.biba.org.uk/insurance-guides/weather-insurance-guides/flood-insurance/</a>
	In partnership with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, BIBA has produced <i>Obtaining Flood Insurance in High Risk Areas</i> , which provides information on obtaining a suitable insurance policy if you live in an area at risk of flooding.	<a href="https://d10ou7l0uhgg4f.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/04000000/high-risk-flood-insurance-guide.pdf">https://d10ou7l0uhgg4f.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/04000000/high-risk-flood-insurance-guide.pdf</a>
<b>Flood Re</b>	Flood Re was set up by the government to make sure that flood insurance is available and affordable to all households. You can find out whether your home qualifies for support from Flood Re – although it operates completely behind the scenes and you should still purchase insurance as normal through your provider.	<a href="https://www.floodre.co.uk/can-flood-re-help-me/">https://www.floodre.co.uk/can-flood-re-help-me/</a>
	Flood Re also provides links to websites offering information on flooding and flood damage, and on how to prepare for flooding events and take action to reduce flood risk.	<a href="https://www.floodre.co.uk/flood-resources/">https://www.floodre.co.uk/flood-resources/</a>

# 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.



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