

New national flood and coastal erosion risk information and its impact on development planning

Background

The Environment Agency (EA) is producing new national flood and coastal erosion risk data. This briefing aims to introduce you to the projects, our main publishing milestones and the support we're offering to external practitioners.

This briefing focuses on the implications of the new data for development planning and our role as a statutory consultee.

Key messages

- New data will be published on Flood Map for Planning on 25 March 2025
- Understanding flood risk and coastal erosion is key to managing risks – including through the decisions made on the location and design of new development
- Our new data should instil greater confidence in planners and developers to pursue the right kinds of development in the right places
- Our data will help alleviate the burden on developers and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to undertake Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), helping to speed and smooth the planning process and provide more certain outcomes
- Significant support is available for EA staff, local authorities and developers

What are our key milestones?

On 17 December we published our '[National assessment of flood and coastal erosion risk in England 2024](#)' report. This gave our explanation of current and future flood and coastal erosion risk in England, using our new data.

On 28 January, we made the new National Flood Risk Assessment (NaFRA) 'Risk of flooding from rivers and sea', 'Risk of flooding from surface water' and new 'national coastal erosion risk' data available on our key digital services.

Looking ahead, our next milestone is on **25 March**, when we will publish new flood risk data on the [Flood Map for Planning](#), including updated Flood Zones.

Where is our new data available?

We're making our new data available across several digital platforms. For each platform we've selected those datasets we think best fit the platform's main users.

Our '[Check your long term flood risk](#)' service is aimed at residents and businesses making short and medium-term decisions about preparing for a flood.

Our '[Flood Map for Planning](#)' is aimed at planners and developers, and those carrying out FRAs, helping to inform the long-term decisions about the location and design of development required by planning policy.

We have two digital services for our coastal erosion information.

1. '[Check coastal erosion risk for an area in England](#)'; and
2. '[Shoreline Management Plan Explorer](#)'

These are aimed at planners, developers and coastal practitioners, but also members of the public. All our data will be available via the [Defra Data Services Platform](#)

What data are we adding to the Flood Map for Planning?

- **Updated Flood Zones** – Will reflect both existing local models and the new and improved national model. Defined in planning guidance and will continue to show present-day flood risk from rivers and sea, ignoring the benefits of existing flood defences.
- **River and sea defended flood extents** – Showing river and sea flood extents with existing flood defences in place, for both the present day and a climate change scenario. This will include a 1 in 30 defended scenario to help LPAs map functional floodplain (3b) in strategic flood risk assessments
- **Rivers and sea undefended flood extents** - For the present day and a climate change scenario.
- **Surface water flood risk extents** – Displayed for the first time, raising the visibility of this important source of flooding. This will just be a present day scenario in the first instance.

To map the possible impacts of climate change on future flood risk from rivers and sea, we've followed our own [Climate Change Allowances](#) guidance and selected a scenario and time-horizon sufficient for most residential and commercial developments.

Will our new data change our statutory consultation arrangements?

Statutory consultation arrangements are not changing as a result of the new data. Because we do not anticipate significant changes to the Flood Zones, we don't expect any significant changes to overall planning application consultation numbers.

Will we add more data in future?

- 25 March 2025 is just the start of the new NaFRA information we'll be making available that will help inform decisions on new development.
- We expect the first updates to start emerging later this year when we'll incorporate more local models – including those where Flood Zone updates were paused during new NaFRA preparations.
- In due course we expect to add more information such as a climate change scenario and depth information for surface water flood risk. And depth information for river and sea flooding.
- We expect to provide quarterly updates of the flood risk data on Flood Map for Planning - during the first year after publication, updates may be more or less frequent as we establish new processes.

Will the new data affect local plan preparation and strategic flood risk assessments?

We know many LPAs are considering the implications of the recent National Planning Policy Framework and may already be planning local plan reviews and updates to Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRAs) as a consequence.

Our new data should be arriving at a helpful time to support this work. Our [SFRA guidance](#) and [good practice guide](#) help planners prepare SFRAs, and includes guidance on when to review or update them.

What support is available?

We've worked in partnership with the Town and Country Planning Association to create a [resources section](#) on their website where we will add relevant materials for developers.

A suite of free eLearning modules is also available on the [TCPA's learning hub](#). These modules are suitable for consultants preparing SFRAs or FRAs.