

Mr Mark Andrews
Coventry City Council
Planning Policy
Tower Block Much Park Street
Coventry
West Midlands
CV1 2PY

Our ref: UT/2008/105205/CS-
07/SB1-L01
Your ref:
Date: 31 March 2016

DRAFT

Dear Mr Andrews

The Environment Agency has the following Statement of Common Ground in relation to our comments and responses from the Council in relation to our representations in relation to the emerging Local Plan.

The Environment Agency would like to confirm that we consider that Coventry City Council to have complied with the Duty to Co-operate, as set out in the Localism Act.

The duty requires that councils set out planning policies to address strategic issues and requires them to consider joint approaches to plan making.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) builds on the requirements of the Localism Act. It indicates that public bodies should:

- Co-operate on cross boundary planning issues;
- Undertake joint working on areas of common interest;
- Work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure that strategic priorities are properly co-ordinated and clearly reflected in Local Plans;
- Consider producing joint policies and strategies;
- Work collaboratively with Local Enterprise Partnerships, Local Nature Partnerships, private sector bodies, utility and infrastructure providers;
- Demonstrate evidence of effective co-operation when submitting a local plan for examination (e.g. a Memorandum of Understanding or jointly prepared strategy or evidence); and
- Satisfy the tests of soundness relating to positive preparation and effectiveness

We can confirm that Coventry City Council has sought to produce a strategic framework for development that balances the priorities of strategic partners and enables appropriate supporting infrastructure and impact mitigation to be put in place where

Environment Agency
9, Sentinel House Wellington Crescent, Fradley Park, Lichfield, WS13 8RR.
Customer services line: 03708 506 506

www.gov.uk/environment-agency

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required. We acknowledge that they have consulted us during the plan making process and considered our recommendations to improve the soundness of the local plan.

We provided comments to your draft plan 31 October 2014 in relation to our remit, however since we wrote to you there were a number of changes to our role as a statutory consultee, a change of consenting procedures to ordinary watercourses, planning guidance in relation to flood risk management is no longer provided within the DCLG Planning Practice Guidance pages, new environmental information has been published that has changed our position and there have been recent flood events within Coventry. (Appended to this letter is a summary of these changes in more detail).

We are no longer Statutory Consultees for surface water management, that role is now with The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) which is Coventry City Council, managed by the Councils Flood Risk Manager.

We have worked closely with the LLFA since their inception which until late 2015 we anticipated that SuDS Approval Boards would be responsible for managing surface water management systems and assets in new developments within a parallel process that would run alongside the planning system. In late 2014 this approach was abandoned and there has been a gradual transfer of responsibilities between the two organizations, including the statutory consultee role we had for commenting on planning applications within flood zone 1, issuing consents for works to ordinary watercourses and the development of Local Flood Risk Management Strategies.

During the transition the Environment Agency has worked closely with the LLFA to support them in their new role and advise them on technical matters.

Both the LLFA and ourselves reviewed and commented on the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which we believe is the most appropriate document with robust evidence to support site allocations within the emerging Local Plan as it was the best available information when it was published in early 2016.

We both will continue to work closely with Coventry City Council to support the emerging Local Plan and to ensure its delivery.

To ensure this joint approach to managing flood risk, we have issued a joint statement of common ground in relation to the proposed modifications to the Local Plan recommended in our letter dated 29 February 2016 in response to the formal submission draft consultation.

On 15 March a meeting was held at Coventry City Councils offices to discuss our recommendations for modifications to the local plan to improve its soundness and to explain why we had made recommendations to the plan at the submission stage. Following the discussion between myself, Neal Thomas, Mark Andrews and Rob Haigh it was decided that given the substantial changes to our role, new environmental data, and responsibilities that Coventry City Council would support the majority of the modifications as proposed by the Environment Agency and supported by the LLFA now we both have joint responsibility for managing flood risk within Coventry.

Summary of proposed changes:

Policy EM1: Planning for Climate Change Adaptation

We welcome the inclusion of this policy, but we recommend that you include the following text

'f) seek opportunities to make space for water and develop new blue infrastructure to accommodate climate change'

Outcome – minor modification agreed between all parties

Policy EM3: Renewable Energy Generation

We recommend the inclusion of the following bullet point of this policy:

- e) for proposals for hydropower the application must be supported by a flood risk assessment and Water Framework Directive assessment. There will be a presumption against the development of renewable energy schemes that would prevent the waterbodies' ability to reach good status or potential as set in the Humber and Severn River Basin Management Plans and should support, where possible, to improving the status class.'*

This wording must be included to demonstrate that the proposal will not increase flood risk, or have a detrimental impact upon the watercourse.

All weirs and small dams associated with hydropower schemes will require the prior written Flood Defence Consent of the Environment Agency if on a Main River and consent from the Lead Local Flood Authority if affecting an Ordinary Watercourse.

Outcome – the Environment Agency is satisfied that subject to the inclusion amendments to policy EM4 being incorporated into the Local Plan, it would be sufficient to ensure that any development proposals would be robustly assessed to ensure that they would not contribute towards the deterioration of waterbody status within Coventry. Therefore subject to the inclusion of amended wording to EM4 we would not require this additional wording to be included within policy EM3.

Policy EM4: Flood Risk Management

1. All major developments must be assessed in respect of the level of flood risk from all sources. If development in areas at risk of flooding is the only option following the application of the sequential test, it will only be permitted where all of the following criteria are met:

- a) the type of development is appropriate to the level of flood risk associated with its location with reference to *the Environment Agency's Flood map for Planning and Coventry's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)* flood zone maps and advice on appropriate uses within these zones from the Environment Agency and/or Lead Local Flood Authority;
- ~~b) it can be demonstrated that no suitable alternative sites are available in an area of lower risk;~~
- c) it is provided with the appropriate minimum standard of flood defence and resilience to aid recovery (including suitable warning and evacuation procedures) which can be maintained for the lifetime of the development;
- d) it does not impede flood flows, does not increase the flood risk on site or elsewhere or result in a loss of floodplain storage capacity;
- ~~e) it would not be subject to regular flooding;~~
- f) in the case of dwellings, it is evident that as a minimum, safe, dry pedestrian access would be available to land not at high risk, and;

- g) in the case of essential infrastructure, access must be guaranteed and must be capable of remaining operational during all flooding events.

all opportunities to reduce flood risk in the surrounding area must be taken, including creating additional flood storage. [Section 15 of the SFRA Level 1 outlines possible future flood risk management schemes].

the functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3b) should be protected from development and reinstated in brownfield areas wherever possible.

single storey buildings, basements and buildings on stilts are not acceptable in Flood Zone 3.

all opportunities to undertake river restoration and enhancement including de-culverting, removing unnecessary structures and reinstating a natural, sinuous watercourse.

development should be set back at least 8m (from the top of bank or toe of a flood defence) of Main Rivers and 5m from Ordinary watercourses for maintenance access. This includes existing culverted watercourses.

finished floor levels must be set a minimum of 600mm above the 1% AEP (1 in 100 year) plus climate change flood level.

where a development benefits from an existing or proposed flood defence scheme, the development should contribute towards the capital and/or maintenance of these defences over its lifetime.

for sites in Flood Zone 3a, development should not impede flow routes, reduce floodplain storage or consume flood storage in a 'flood cell' within a defended area. If the development does result in a loss of storage, compensatory floodplain storage should be provided on a 'level for level' and 'volume for volume' basis.

for sites in Flood Zone 3a, all types of new development behind flood defences is avoided, where possible, due to the residual risks of breach and overtopping.

There will be a presumption against the development that would prevent the waterbodies' ability to reach good status or potential as set in the Severn River Basin Management Plans and should support, where possible, to improving the status class.'

2. A sequential, risk-based approach to the location of suitable development will be undertaken by the Council based on the Environment Agency's latest flood maps, SFRA flood zones and Vulnerability Classification to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding avoiding, where possible, flood risk to people and property and managing any residual risk.
3. The Exception Test (for use when there are large areas in Flood Zones 2 and 3, where the Sequential Test alone cannot deliver acceptable sites, but where some continuing development is necessary) will apply where development will provide wider sustainability benefits that outweigh flood risk, fully informed by an appropriately scaled Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) which indicates that development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the

vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible reducing flood risk overall.

4. 'Land that is required for current and future flood management will be safeguarded from development. Where development lies adjacent to or benefits from an existing or future flood defence scheme they will be expected to contribute towards the cost of delivery and/or maintenance of that scheme'.
5. A Flood Risk Assessment is required, appropriate to the scale and nature of the development proposed, where the development is:
 - a) within a river floodplain, as defined by the Coventry SFRA indicative flood zone maps;
 - b) within 20 metres of any watercourse;
 - c) adjacent to, or including, any flood bank or other flood control structure;
 - d) within an area where there may be surface water issues and drainage problems;

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, the overall aim of this policy is to direct development away from areas of high flood risk and avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of fluvial and pluvial flooding. Where development cannot take place in areas of low flood risk, a sequential test should be applied in which it is acknowledged that extensive areas of built development fall into the high risk areas and that the re-use of previously developed land may be needed to avoid economic stagnation. Where in the wider overall interest, development is supported as an exception to this policy with high risk areas, applicants will need to demonstrate that they strictly comply with all criteria of the policy.

The Environment Agency has produced flood zone maps for local and other watercourses, as well as surface water. The maps are based upon the approximate extent of flooding and are indicative only, being based on the best information available at the time. These maps should be used as a basis for consultation and not for decision making. The most up to date indicative flood zone maps are available from the Environment Agency. Additional information may be obtained by contacting the Council's Flood Risk Management and Drainage team, in addition to the maps that accompany the 2015 SFRA.

SFRA maps show both fluvial flood zones and areas subject to surface water flooding in the city. The flood zone maps show the level of risk and appropriate uses within them. The fluvial flood zones are, Zone 1, being the low probability zone where all land uses are considered acceptable; fluvial Zone 2 which carries medium risk and essential infrastructure and where water compatible uses which are less vulnerable are appropriate; fluvial Zone 3 which is the flood plain and only suitable for water compatible and less vulnerable uses. The surface water flooding indicates the areas of the city that are subject to predicted pluvial flood risk within formerly defined fluvial flooding Zone 1. The Council has undertaken a level one and level two Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2015), which has provided the evidence to directly inform the allocation of land for new development over the plan period. This has also provided a basis for a strategic policy to set a framework for more site-specific Flood Risk Assessments (FRA's) by:

1. choosing sites outside flood risk zones as far as practicable;
2. controlling development within flood risk areas and the types of development which may be considered;

3. assessing opportunities to facilitate the relocation of development, and;
4. incorporating measures to address flood risk from all new developments, such as sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS), as set out in policy EM5.

EM4 Outcome - The proposed changes to policy EM4 are acknowledged and understood by the city council. However in terms of their appropriate nature within a Local Plan the city council retains some concerns that some of the changes proposed are excessive in detail. This is acknowledged and understood by the Environment Agency, however their inclusion is still requested. As such both parties are happy to discuss this further at the examination in public.

For the avoidance of doubt:

- the removal of points b and f from Part 1 of the policy are agreed
- The insertion of the following paragraphs (in italics) on page 4 of this note (below point g of part 1 of the policy) - 1, 2, 3, 6 and 8 are accepted
- the removal of points e and f from part 5 of the policy are agreed

Policy EM5 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

1. All development must apply SuDS and should ensure that surface water runoff is managed as close to its source as possible.
2. SuDS are the preferred way of managing and conveying surface water. All developments will consider and demonstrate how the following hierarchy for the discharge of surface water from a site will be applied:
 - a) Discharge by infiltration and water reuse technologies
 - b) Discharge to a watercourse allied with water reuse technologies
 - c) Discharge to surface water sewer allied with water reuse technologies.
3. All development should carry out infiltration tests and a ground water risk assessment, including seasonal groundwater monitoring, to demonstrate whether infiltration is possible and that ground water would not be polluted to Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority requirements. Where it is proven that infiltration is not possible, allied with water reuse technologies, surface water should be discharged into a watercourse (in agreement with the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority) at a rate no greater than Qbar greenfield runoff, or an appropriate minimum rate for small sites, agreed by the Lead Local Flood Authority. If there is no watercourse available then, allied with water reuse technologies, surface water should be discharged to a surface water sewer at a rate no greater than Qbar greenfield runoff.
4. In exceptional circumstances, where a sustainable drainage system cannot be provided, it must be demonstrated that it is not possible to incorporate sustainable drainage systems, and an acceptable means of surface water disposal is provided at source which does not increase the risk of flooding or give rise to environmental problems and improves on the current situation with a reduction in peak and total discharge.

The long-term maintenance arrangements for all SuDS must be agreed with the relevant risk management authority. A separate SPD will be produced to detail how SuDS schemes will be designed in accordance with the technical standards set out by the Coventry Lead Local Flood Authority and by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

SuDS involve a range of techniques that mimic the way that rainfall drains in natural systems and avoids any increase in flood risk and improves water quality. Many existing drainage systems can cause problems of flooding, pollution or damage to the environment and are not proving to be sustainable in the long term. The key objectives in the use of SuDS are:

- reducing flood risk and mitigating the impacts of climate change;
- maintaining and restoring natural flow routes together with the rate and volume of surface runoff to reduce the risk of flooding;
- improving the water environment quality;
- minimising diffuse pollution;
- reducing pressure on the sewerage network;
- improving habitat, biodiversity and local amenity; and.
- harness opportunities to incorporate multi-functional uses such as green space play areas.

The Council is also the Lead Local Flood Authority (or LLFA for short) with responsibility for developing, maintaining and monitoring a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy in partnership with other relevant bodies in the area. In addition, the LLFA is a statutory consultee on all major planning applications and a consultee on a non-statutory basis on all minor applications whilst also advising on the approval of all sustainable drainage and related systems, surface flooding and ground water for all planning applications.

In respect of SuDS, it is important to emphasise the need for a Management train where drainage techniques can be used in series to change the flow and quality characteristics of the runoff in stages. For a management train to work effectively the train must contain the right type of SUDS. The detail for this would be set out in the SPD, but all consideration should be given to the principle by ensuring developments implement source controls as part of the management train. In environmental terms this approach is good for water quality. With respect to future maintenance, it places the responsibility with the development owner and reduces or eliminates runoff from the small rainfall events which constitute the majority of rain events.

EM5 Outcome - Coventry accept that the proposed changes to policy EM5 are appropriate.

Policy EM7: Waste Management

We recommend the inclusion of the following bullet points within section 2 of the policy

'g) Existing waste management facilities or land allocated for waste management uses will be protected from encroachment by incompatible land uses that are more sensitive to odour, noise, dust and pest impacts.

h) Proposals for waste management facilities will only be permitted where they would not have an unacceptable impact on the quantity or quality of surface or groundwater resources'.

Outcome - Coventry Accept the 2 additional points to respond to change in national permitted development rights

Suggested Policy EM9: Redevelopment of Previously Developed Land.

'Development will be permitted where proposals do not have a negative impact on water quality, either directly through pollution of surface or ground water or indirectly through the treatment of waste water by whatever means.

Prior to any potential development, consultation must be held with Severn Trent Water to ensure that the required wastewater infrastructure is in place in sufficient time. In line with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive, development must not affect the water bodies' ability to reach good status or potential as set in the Humber and Severn River Basin Management Plans and should support, where possible, to improving the status class.

Developers and operators must provide adequate information when submitting their proposals so that the potential impact on groundwater resources and quality can be adequately assessed'

No development will be permitted within a groundwater Source Protection Zone 1 which would physically disturb an aquifer, and no permission will be granted without a risk assessment demonstrating there would be no adverse effect on water resources.

Development shall not be permitted where the proposed waste water infrastructure could pose an unacceptable risk of pollution of the underlying aquifer or receiving watercourse.

Where there is an unacceptable risk to controlled waters there is a presumption against granting planning permission'

The Environment Agency expects any developer and/or consultant to follow the risk management framework provided in CLR11 - Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination (2004) when dealing with land affected by contamination. Furthermore, it is advised to refer to the Environment Agency's Guidance on Requirements for Land Contamination Reports (2005) for the specific type of information that we require to assess the risks to Controlled Waters.

We require the risk to groundwater of any significant contamination to be considered by the usual means of a desk study, site investigation and subsequent conceptual model and risk assessment, where necessary leading to suitable remedial action and related method statement. This is in accordance with NPPF (notably paragraphs 109 -112), which indicates that where development is proposed on land that is known or suspected to be affected by contamination then the risks to human health and the wider environment should be assessed by the applicant for consideration by the LPA prior to determination.

The assessment should provide such information as is necessary to determine whether the proposed development can proceed. Where such assessment shows that remediation is required then the standard of remediation that should be achieved through the grant of planning permission for new development is the removal of unacceptable risk and making the site suitable for its new use, including the removal of existing pollutant linkages.

All receptors relevant to the site should be protected to an appropriate standard. As a minimum, after carrying out the development and commencement of its use, the land should not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Development proposals will need to comply with the Environment Agency publication Groundwater Protection: Policy and Practice' (GP3) which may require development may be restricted at certain locations and there will need to be careful consideration

given to the potential water quality risks and impact on flooding and surface water drainage.

(<http://www.environmentagency.gov.uk/research/library/publications/144346.aspx>).

Outcome – Agreed by Coventry City Council to be included because of recently published data in relation to monitoring Water Framework Directive Measures , published in support of the Severn River Basin Management Plan.

Appendix 7 – IDP (Dec 2015)

We note that the IDP only refers to flood prevention associated with STW assets under the header of “Utilities: Water and Sewage”. We are disappointed that none of the flood alleviation schemes that we highlighted during the 2014 consultation have been included in the IDP. These included:

- Broad Lane/Banner Lane, Brookstray Flood Alleviation Scheme
- Canley Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme
- Upper Brookstray Flood Alleviation Scheme

We consider that these schemes are essential to ensure flood risk is not increased in locations where future growth is proposed. We would welcome the opportunity to include flood alleviation schemes in the IDP based on schemes in the National FCERM 6-year programme, review of recent flood events and the high-level identification of potential flood storage locations in the updated SFRA.

Outcome - Schemes identified in the response have been included in the IDP. In addition Coventry have also added the bund at Siskin Drive and the Wetland proposals for Lake View Park.

Policy H7: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

The site at Siskin Drive, Coventry is located in Flood Zone 2 of the Upper Avon, a designated Main River. Caravans, Mobile Homes and Park Homes intended for permanent residential use are classified as “highly vulnerable” in accordance with Table 2 of the Planning Practice Guidance: Flood Risk and Coastal Change. Highly vulnerable development is only appropriate in Flood Zone 2 on completion of the Exception Test.

We would recommend reviewing the suitability of this site or undertaking a Level 2 SFRA to support its allocation within the Local Plan or we would recommend that it be removed.

Outcome - The FRA from the Siskin Drive planning permission (and it’s Addendum) is to be added to the evidence base and identified as the Level 2 SFRA for the site linked to the extant planning permission. This document was approved by the Environment Agency as part of the extant planning permission. The Environment Agency supports this site allocation.

Policy H8: Care Homes, Supporting Housing, Nursing Home and Older Persons Accommodation

We recommend that you include an additional requirement that this type of development *‘should not be located in areas at risk of flooding’*.

Outcome - No change required as the proposed amendments to Policy EM4 address flood risk for more vulnerable development.

Policy H10: Student Accommodation

Coventry University is located in the City Centre where there is low flood risk but surrounding areas are located in Flood Zones 2/3. Conversions to self-contained student accommodation on the ground floor in flood risk areas should be avoided. Halls of residence/student accommodation is classified as “more vulnerable” development and is only appropriate in Flood Zone 3 where the Exception Test has been passed in full.

We recommend that an additional point is included that student accommodation ‘*should not be located in areas of high risk of flooding*’.

Outcome - No change required as the proposed amendments to Policy EM4 address flood risk for more vulnerable development.

Policy R2: Coventry City Centre – Development Strategy

We requested that you include the following point into the policy:

‘o) development should contribute to the deculverting of the River Sherborne and create a natural, sinuous river channel, providing new and enhanced blue and green infrastructure’.

We have provided separate comments in relation to the Coventry City Centre Area Action Plan (January 2016). We note that one of the key components of the transformation of the City Centre includes the restoration of the River Sherborne, and we recommend that this aspiration be included within the test in relation to this policy.

Outcome – We support the following approach jointly agreed by Coventry City Council and the LLFA.

Instead of including our recommended text the following point would be included within the policy and in CC1 of the AAP

‘Supporting the reintroduction of blue infrastructure throughout the city centre, including opportunities for deculverting wherever possible’

This allows the City Centre to benefit from many of the positive aspects of reconnecting with the historic River Sherborne, it will help to manage surface water in a sustainable way and ensure that deculverting is not prohibited by new development in the future. As the Environment Agency would object to development above the culverted River Sherborne but there is not an implantable strategy in place to fully restore the river at this time, it would offer many of the functional benefits of a restored watercourse, and provide an attractive focus for new developments.

Policy GE1: Green Infrastructure

Point 5 includes text to support the De-culverting within the City Centre, we would request that this policy is amended to include the following text:

*‘A key element of Coventry’s approach to green infrastructure will be the continued development of a network of green spaces, water bodies, paths and cycle ways.
‘Where a development proposal lies adjacent to a river corridor or tributary, a natural sinuous river channel should be retained or, where possible reinstated. Culverts should be removed unless it can be demonstrated that it is impractical to do so.’*

Although the City Centre AAP includes specific measure to promote the deculverting of the River Sherborne this approach should be expanded to include the whole city.

We would like to see the addition of the following bullet points added to point 6 of the policy:

- *‘enhancing its functionality, quality, connectivity and accessibility*
- *ensure that a key aim of green infrastructure is the maintenance and improvement and expansion of biodiversity;*
- *integrate proposals to improve green infrastructure in the delivery of new developments, particularly through area based regeneration initiatives and major proposals and schemes;*
- *flood risk management and improving surface water quality’*

Outcome – Coventry have agreed to amend the last sentence replaced as requested and include the additional 4 points added into point 6 of policy.

Policy GE3: Biodiversity, Geological, Landscape and Archaeological Conservation

While we support this policy we request the following bullet point be added to part 1 of the policy:

‘d) species which are legally protected, in decline, are rare within Coventry or which are covered by national, regional or local Biodiversity Action Plans will not be harmed by development.’

Although the policy offers protection to designate sites, it fails to include measures that offer protection to protected species, which are often found in locations outside protected sites.

Outcome – Coventry have agreed to include the additional bullet point.

In Conclusion

We would like to highlight the positive and supportive relationship we have with Coventry City Council and Coventry LLFA in response to our concerns.

Should the following modifications be made to the emerging Local Plan the Environment Agency would confirm that it will support sustainable development and meet all of the regulatory tests of soundness.

We would like the opportunity to make further representations in relation to the above policies at the Examination in Public of the Local Plan to support Coventry City Council for supporting the proposed changes.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Becky Clarke
Sustainable Places Planning Specialist
Direct Dial: 01543 404945
Direct Fax: 01543 444161
Direct email: becky.clarke@environment-agency.gov.uk

Mr Mark Andrews
Coventry City Council
Planning Policy
Tower Block Much Park Street
Coventry
West Midlands
CV1 2PY

Our ref:
Your ref:

Date: 31 March 2016

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Dear Mr Andrews

The Lead Local Flood Authority has the following Statement of Common Ground in relation to our comments and responses from the Council in relation to our representations in relation to the emerging Local Plan.

We would like to confirm that we consider that Coventry City Council to have complied with the Duty to Co-operate, as set out in the Localism Act.

The duty requires that councils set out planning policies to address strategic issues and requires them to consider joint approaches to plan making.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) builds on the requirements of the Localism Act. It indicates that public bodies should:

- Co-operate on cross boundary planning issues;
- Undertake joint working on areas of common interest;
- Work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure that strategic priorities are properly co-ordinated and clearly reflected in Local Plans;
- Consider producing joint policies and strategies;
- Work collaboratively with Local Enterprise Partnerships, Local Nature Partnerships, private sector bodies, utility and infrastructure providers;
- Demonstrate evidence of effective co-operation when submitting a local plan for examination (e.g. a Memorandum of Understanding or jointly prepared strategy or evidence); and
- Satisfy the tests of soundness relating to positive preparation and effectiveness

We can confirm that Coventry City Council has sought to produce a strategic framework for development that balances the priorities of strategic partners and enables appropriate supporting infrastructure and impact mitigation to be put in place where required. We acknowledge that they have consulted us during the plan making process

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and considered our recommendations to improve the soundness of the local plan. We support the proposed amendments to the emerging Local Plan as detailed within the Environment Agency's letter dated 31 March 2016.

We have worked closely with the Environment since the LLFA was brought into force. Since late there has been a gradual transfer of responsibilities between the two organizations, including the statutory consultee role we have to comment on planning applications within flood zone 1, issuing consents for works to ordinary watercourses and the development of Local Flood Risk Management Strategies.

During the transition the LLFA has worked closely with the Environment Agency to support deliver flood risk reduction measures and manage surface water flood risk.

Both the Environment and ourselves reviewed and commented on the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which we believe is the most appropriate document with robust evidence to support site allocations within the emerging Local Plan as it was the best available information when it was published in early 2016.

We both will continue to work closely with Coventry City Council to support the emerging Local Plan and to ensure its delivery.

To ensure this joint approach to managing flood risk, we have issued a joint statement of common ground in relation to the proposed modifications to the Local Plan .

On 15 March a meeting was held at Coventry City Councils offices to discuss the Environment Agency's recommendations for modifications to the local plan to improve its soundness and to listen to their explanation for the proposed policy modifications.

Following the discussion between myself, Becky Clarke, Mark Andrews and Rob Haigh it was decided that given the substantial changes to the Environment Agency's role, the new responsibilities of the LLFA ,new environmental data, that Coventry City Council would support the majority of the modifications as proposed by the Environment Agency and that they are supported by the LLFA now we both have joint responsibility for managing flood risk within Coventry.

We would like to highlight the positive and supportive relationship we have with Coventry City Council and the Environment Agency in response to managing flood risk.

Should the following modifications be made to the emerging Local Plan the LLFA would confirm that it will support sustainable development and meet all of the regulatory tests of soundness.

Yours sincerely

February 2016: Climate Change Allowances

The new allowances should help ensure new housing and other development remain safe and resilient to flooding, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, in line with national planning policy.

Work to review and update the allowances is based on new scientific evidence. The main changes are to the peak river flow allowances:

- They are provided for each river basin district rather than a single national allowance.
- A range of allowances are provided based on different probabilities for each epoch, rather than a single allowance for each epoch.
- The allowances for the upper end of the range are significantly higher than previous single national allowance.
- There is also a small change to peak rainfall allowances. Rather than a single allowance, a range of allowances is provided. The allowance at the upper end of the range is slightly higher than the current single allowance. As previously, the allowances are provided at a national scale.

This change has implications for all emerging policies that seek to manage water or flood risk or are vulnerable to flooding.

River Basin Management plans: 2015

From: Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and Environment Agency
First published: 18 February 2016

- This document sets out the:
- current state of the water environment
- pressures affecting the water environment
- environmental objectives for protecting and improving the waters
- programme of measures, actions needed to achieve the objectives
- progress since the 2009 plan
- It also informs decisions on land-use planning because water and land resources are closely linked.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/severn-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan>

This change has implications for all emerging policies that seek to manage water quality, pollution, or modification to waterbodies.

Key issues include:

Physical modifications - affecting 27% of water bodies in this river basin district

People have made many physical changes to rivers, lakes and estuaries, for example, flood defences and weirs, and changes to the size and shape of natural river channels for land drainage and navigation. These modifications alter natural flow levels, cause

excessive build up of sediment in surface water bodies and the loss of habitats and recreational uses. In many cases the uses and associated physical modifications need to be maintained. In these circumstances it may not be possible to achieve good ecological status.

Pollution from waste water – affecting 29% of water bodies in this river basin district

Waste water, or sewage, can contain large amounts of nutrients (such as phosphorus and nitrates), ammonia, bacteria, harmful chemicals and other damaging substances. It can enter water bodies where sewage treatment technology to remove enough of the phosphorus and harmful chemicals doesn't exist, from leakages from privately owned septic tanks and, in wet weather, storm overflows can discharge untreated sewage having a significant impact on bathing waters. Population growth and changes in rainfall patterns are increasing the pressure on the sewer network.

Pollution from towns, cities and transport - affecting 12% of water bodies in this river basin district

Rainwater draining from roofs, roads and pavements carries pollutants, including grit, bacteria, oils, metals, vehicle emissions, detergent and road salt drains to surface water, including estuaries and coastal waters. Many homes and workplaces have 'misconnected' drains, meaning that dirty water often enters surface waters and groundwater rather than foul sewer drains.

Changes to the natural flow and level of water - affecting 7% of water bodies in this river basin district

Reduced flow and water levels in rivers and groundwater caused by human activity (such as abstraction) or less rainfall than usual can mean that there is not enough water for people to use and wildlife might not be able to survive. Reduced flow affects the health of fish and exaggerates the impacts of barriers such as weirs. Climate change research shows that by 2050 England and Wales can expect significant seasonal variations, with higher winter and lower summer flows, and a reduction in flow overall. In the long term, there will be less water available to abstract for drinking, industry and irrigating crops.

Negative effects of invasive non-native species - affecting <1% of water bodies in this river basin district

Invasive non-native species can have significant economic impacts. The cost of controlling invasive species to make sure that flood defences and the natural environment are not compromised is rising. American signal crayfish are becoming widespread and affect animals such as fish and invertebrates. Other species such as mitten crabs destroy habitats like reed beds and can cause banks to collapse by burrowing into them. Climate change is to drive certain species northwards, increasing their frequency and variety in the future and affecting the condition of water bodies.

Pollution from rural areas - affecting 40% of water bodies in this river basin district

Some approaches to land management have increased the amount of soils and sediment that is being washed off the land carrying phosphorus into waters which can cause excessive algae growth called 'eutrophication'. A changing climate means that more intense rainfall is likely to occur, increasing the risk of impacts further. Nitrate from

fertilisers has built up in groundwater over decades and will take a long time to reduce. Sedimentation from erosion, forestry practices, saturated and compacted fields and livestock trampling on river banks has affected river ecology by smothering fish spawning grounds. Other impacts include bacteriological contamination from animal faeces and inappropriately stored and applied livestock slurry being washed off the land, and, pesticides from farming, forestry, golf courses and parks. These contaminants pose a particular threat to bathing waters, shellfish waters and drinking water.

Pollution from abandoned mines - affecting 2% of water bodies in this river basin district

Minewater is water that has naturally entered the mine workings. When the mines were operating the minewater was drained or pumped to keep it away from working areas. After mines close, mine workings flood. This results in both surface waters and groundwater being contaminated with dissolved metals such as iron, lead, copper, zinc or cadmium. In addition, impacts from the leaching of metals due to ore crushing and settlement lagoons can be a real concern because the resulting spoil heaps are often large and close to water.

Roles and Responsibilities for Flood Risk Management

Environment Agency:

They have a strategic overview of all sources of flooding (rivers, the sea, groundwater, reservoirs and surface water).

They are responsible for the delivery of flood risk management activities on Main Rivers, including (as a statutory consultee) for development within 20 metres of a main river, development located within the floodplain, and we also provide flood defence consents for works to main rivers. They also regulate reservoir safety, and working in partnership with the Met Office to provide flood forecasts and warnings.

Coventry Lead Local Flood Authority:

They are responsible for managing flooding from surface water, ordinary watercourses and groundwater. They must be consulted in relation to any surface water management / drainage proposals, development that incorporates Sustainable Drainage features (SuDS) and works to Ordinary Watercourses.

Please note that from 1st April 2016 they will also be responsible for discharging existing planning conditions relating to surface water management – this will no longer be the remit of the Environment Agency.

Severn Trent Water:

The water and sewerage companies in England are responsible for managing the risks of flooding from their surface water and foul or combined sewer systems.