

MODEL POLICIES
FOR USE IN
DEVELOPMENT
PLANS



NRA

National Rivers Authority

INTRODUCTION

The NRA has a wide range of direct powers to prevent and control water related problems, and where appropriate will use them. However, these are not always adequate to protect against all of the potential problems surrounding development, and rarely offer preventative measures. Many of these measures are material to Town and Country Planning and it is for this reason that the NRA is involved in the planning process. When consulted on Draft Plans the NRA will comment on issues related to specific sites but for the process to be fully effective it is important that policies which cover NRA interests are incorporated in Development Plans. Model policies have been prepared, as set out below, but it is appreciated that to meet individual Plan styles the exact format may need to be modified.

FLOOD DEFENCE

Policy 1 The Council recognises the importance of the natural watercourse system for providing essential drainage of land and will protect that function against adverse forms of development, specifically to prevent:-

- (i) Development in area liable to flooding.
- (ii) The loss of access to watercourses for future maintenance.
- (iii) The loss of natural flood plain except in exceptional circumstances and where compensatory measures are provided as agreed with the local planning authority.
- (iv) Drainage from development giving rise to substantial changes in the characteristics of surface water run-off unless adequate off site works can be provided.
- (v) Adverse effects upon the integrity of tidal and fluvial defences.

These policies are necessary to ensure new development is itself not at risk from flooding and also does not put other areas at risk, endangering both life and property. Flood plains and areas of low lying land adjacent to a watercourse are by their very nature liable to flood under certain conditions. These areas also provide for storage

of flood water and consequently not only are people and property at risk but development also reduces the capacity of the flood plain, impedes the flow of water and increases the risk of flooding elsewhere. Development in upper parts of a catchment can also have a significant impact upon others downstream by increasing surface run-off. An obligation to provide suitable mitigating measures is therefore necessary where this applies. A guarantee of future access to watercourses is required. However, the NRA's own powers under Land



Drainage legislation extend only to designated main rivers and, even where these exist, are in practical terms very limited when development has proceeded in accordance with local plan policy.

National Rivers Authority
Information Centre
Head Office
Class No NRA - Severn Tent
Accession No ARRD

REGISTERED CONTAMINATED LAND

Policy 2 The Council will only allow development on registered contaminated land where it can be demonstrated that it will not cause or increase pollution of watercourses and groundwater resources.

The disturbance of contaminated land can mobilise pollutants and either cause first time pollution or worsen existing problems. Leachates and drainage from contaminated land sites pose serious risks of major pollution to both rivers and groundwaters.

prevent use of those resources. Groundwater resources are a vital component of the potable water supplies but once polluted the damage is invariably irrevocable. It is essential therefore that development which threatens these resources is prevented.

WATER POLLUTION PREVENTION

Policy 4 The Council recognises the importance of maintaining the quality of the water based environment and will not permit development which could

- (i) For the development sites where connection to existing main sewerage is practicable, the Council will oppose any development incorporating independent sewage treatment facilities, and
- (ii) The Council will seek to promote and co-ordinate public sewage disposal facilities or require developers to demonstrate that the multiple use of individual facilities such as septic tanks is feasible without causing a public health nuisance and possible water pollution especially where there is a potential for high density infill.
- (iii) The Council will ensure that where increased sewerage and/or sewage treatment capacity is required development will not be allowed to be occupied in advance of the completion of the improved facilities.
- (iv) The Council will ensure that no development involving the storage of oils and chemicals shall take place unless adequate measures have been taken to prevent discharge to watercourses in the event of spillages and/or leaks.

GROUNDWATER PROTECTION

Policy 3 The Council will have regard to the NRA's "Policy and Practice for the Protection of Groundwater" and will not allow development which could damage groundwater resources and

damage the quality and ecology of watercourses, or compromise statutory quality objectives. The Council will ensure that all development is served by satisfactory arrangements for disposal of foul sewage, trade effluent and surface water, and specifically:-

These policies seek to ensure the most environmentally effective means of disposal of foul sewage, contaminated surface water and trade effluents is used for any development. The Authority would wherever possible wish to see sewage and trade effluents disposed of via a recognised water reclamation facility where capacity exists.

Alternatively the Council could promote the necessary infrastructure, together with the utilities companies, where there would otherwise be multiple use of small treatment plants. It is often in practical terms difficult to guarantee a consistent quality of effluent from small privately operated treatment plants and the problems are often then compounded by having many units in close proximity giving rise to environmental health nuisance as well as potential water pollution problems.

With increasing population and water use sewerage systems and treatment works become overloaded. Where development is allowed to continue despite overloading, pollution of watercourses will occur. The Authority has powers to control the standards of effluent from treatment works, with the ultimate sanction of prosecution. However, this may be too late to prevent damage and a reasonable approach would be to phase development to coincide with increased treatment capacity.

Equally, there are circumstances where development cannot be achieved without detriment to quality or ecology and the Authority will seek refusal of planning consent on principle in such cases.

WATER ENVIRONMENT

Policy 5 The Council recognises the importance of the natural watercourse system and wetland areas as valuable wildlife habitats and for their amenity interests and will:-



- (i) protect those interests against adverse forms of development and
- (ii) encourage the development of water based recreation and public access whenever appropriate and where it will not conflict with the ecological value of the area.

The Water Resources Act 1991 (Section 16) places upon the Authority a duty not only to further the conservation of landscape, flora, fauna and geological features but also to take measures to enhance it as far as any of

its functions are concerned. It also has duties to promote recreation and to have regard to the conservation of historic and archaeological features. Clearly, developments can severely threaten these interests.

WATER RESOURCES

Policy 6 The Council will not allow development to proceed prior to the

availability of the necessary water resources, the use of which has no detrimental effect on the environment.

The development of water resources for public water supply is becoming increasingly difficult in some areas. The Authority has a duty to ensure that providing water for new development does not have a detrimental impact on existing users, nature conservation or recreation.

NATIONAL RIVERS AUTHORITY
SEVERN-TRENT REGION

Planning liaison areas, and local
planning authorities



- KEY**
-  Regional Boundary
 -  County Boundaries
 -  Planning Liaison Boundaries
 -  Regional Office
 -  Area Office

*Regional Office,
Sapphire East, 550 Streetsbrook Road,
Solihull B91 1QT.
Telephone: 021-711 2324
Facsimile: 021-711 5824*

*Severn catchment down to and including
River Teme confluence:
Upper Severn Area Office, Hafren House,
Welshpool Road, Shelton, Shrewsbury SY3 8BB.
Telephone: (0743) 272828
Facsimile: (0743) 272138*

*Severn catchment below River Teme confluence:
including Avon catchment:
Lower Severn Area Office, Riversmeet House,
Newtown Industrial Estate, Northway Lane,
Tewkesbury GL20 7JG.
Telephone: (0684) 850951
Facsimile: (0684) 293599*

*Trent catchment down to and including
River Dove confluence:
Upper Trent Area Office, Sentinel House,
9 Wellington Crescent, Fradley Park,
Lichfield WS13 8RR.
Telephone: (0543) 444141
Facsimile: (0543) 444161*

*Trent catchment below River Dove confluence:
Lower Trent Area Office, Trentside,
Scarrington Road, Off Lady Bay Bridge,
West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5FA.
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