

Matter 6: Water Management

Issue: Are the policies on water management justified, effective and consistent with national policy?

6.1 Is Policy DM33 justified, effective and consistent with national policy?

1. The HBF does not consider that Policy DM33 is justified, effective or consistent with national policy.
2. Paragraph 1 of the policy states that proposals will be required to minimise the risk of flooding to people and property by taking a sequential approach which directs development, including access/egress, play / recreation areas and gardens to the areas at the lowest risk of flooding.
3. The HBF considers that in relation to play/recreation areas this is contrary to guidance set out in the PPG¹ which provides the flood risk vulnerability classifications, and identifies amenity open space, nature conservation biodiversity and outdoor sports and recreation as being water-compatible development. As such, the HBF recommends that this element of the policy wording is removed.
4. Paragraph 2 of this policy states that new development will need to satisfy the requirements of the sequential test and exception test where necessary in accordance with the requirements of national planning policy and any other relevant guidance including the Council's Flood Risk SPD.
5. The HBF does not consider that it is appropriate for the Plan to require new developments to be in accordance with the Council's Flood Risk SPD. This SPD is not being tested as part of the preparation of the Plan, and therefore its contents should not be required to be conformed with. The HBF considers that this part of the policy should be amended to remove the requirement to accord with the SPD, and instead identify it as a consideration in the determination of applications.
6. Part VI of this policy states that proposals will be required to reduce the existing causes and impacts of flooding by reducing surface water run-off and / or increasing the capacity of flood storage areas. It also states that opportunities must be taken to improve the function of watercourses and the opportunities must be taken to introduce the natural flood management techniques on and off the site to reduce flooding.
7. Whilst the HBF concur that seeking to reduce flood risk is laudable, this could be at considerable cost for any developments in these areas. This could potentially have a significant impact on the delivery of homes and will the HBF consider that the costs associated with this policy will need to be carefully considered as part of the viability of any development.

¹ PPG ID: 7-066-20140306

6.2 Has sufficient regard been given to the PPG's advice in terms of flood risk vulnerability?

1. The HBF does not consider the appropriate regard has been given to the PPG's advice in terms of flood risk vulnerability and the classifications that the PPG identifies in Table 2². Table 2 identifies amenity open space, nature conservation and biodiversity, outdoor sports and recreation and essential facilities such as changing rooms as water compatible development. Table 3³ suggests that water compatible uses are appropriate in Zones 1, 2 and 3.

6.3 Are criteria III f. and g. of Policy DM33 sufficiently clear in respect of other sources of flooding?

6.4 Are the requirements of Policy DM34 justified, effective, and consistent with national policy? Is Policy DM34 sufficiently flexible?

8. The HBF does not consider that Policy DM34 is justified, effective or consistent with national policy, and do not consider that it is sufficiently flexible.
9. This policy requires all new development to use Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) giving priority to naturalistic solutions incorporate into the soft landscaping of the development. It goes on to set out the drainage hierarchy and to lists the elements that the SuDS must incorporate, it states that on greenfield sites the peak run-off rate and volume must not exceed the existing greenfield rates.
10. The NPPF⁴ already looks for major developments to incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate. The HBF agrees that wherever practicable, it is important to incorporate SuDS within planned major development schemes in line with the NPPF. SuDS can improve the quality of life in a development by making them more visually attractive, sustainable and more resilient to change, by improving urban air quality, regulating building temperatures, reducing noise and delivering recreation and educational opportunities. However, it will be important for the Council to be flexible in relation to how SuDs are provided as devising an appropriate layout is going to require a very careful balancing exercise of many competing factors, particularly in relation to other planning policy requirements, the efficient use of land and the individual site circumstances.
11. There may also be examples where an above ground solution is not feasible and other alternatives from within the hierarchy are considered. This flexibility is a fundamental aspect of the Sustainable Drainage Hierarchy. This flexibility will also need consideration in relation to the requirements for all SuDS to incorporate landscape and amenity enhancement and environmental and biodiversity benefits, which may not be possible in relation to underground attenuation.

6.5 Is Policy DM36 consistent with national policy?

² PPG ID: 7-066-20140306

³ ID: 7-067-20140306

⁴ Paragraph 169

6.6 Should Policy DM36 make specific reference to how development within defined Groundwater Source Protection Zones would be assessed?

6.7 Has sufficient consideration been given to developments on public water supply catchment land?