

Flood risk assessments: Climate change allowances

Application of the allowances and local considerations

Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire

1) The climate change allowances

The [National Planning Practice Guidance](#) refers planners, developers and advisors to the Environment Agency guidance on considering climate change in Flood Risk Assessments (FRAs). This guidance was updated in February 2016 and is available on [Gov.uk](#) and should be read in conjunction with this document. The guidance can be used for planning applications, local plans, neighbourhood plans and other projects. It provides climate change allowances for peak river flow, peak rainfall, sea level rise, wind speed and wave height. The guidance provides a range of allowances to assess fluvial flooding, rather than a single national allowance. It advises on what allowances to use for assessment based on vulnerability classification, flood zone and development lifetime.

2) Assessment of climate change impacts on fluvial flooding

Table A below indicates the level of technical assessment of climate change impacts on fluvial flooding appropriate for new developments depending on their scale and location. This should be used as **a guide only**. Ultimately, the agreed approach should be based on expert local knowledge of flood risk conditions, local sensitivities and other influences. **For these reasons we recommend that applicants and / or their consultants should contact the Environment Agency at the pre-planning application stage to confirm the assessment approach, on a case by case basis.** **Table A** defines three possible approaches to account for flood risk impacts due to climate change, in new development proposals:

- **Basic:** Developer can add an allowance to the 'design flood' (i.e. 1% annual probability) peak levels to account for potential climate change impacts. The allowance should be derived and agreed locally by Environment Agency teams.
- **Intermediate:** Developer can use existing modelled flood and flow data to construct a stage-discharge rating curve, which can be used to interpolate a flood level based on the required peak flow allowance to apply to the 'design flood' flow.
- **Detailed:** Perform detailed hydraulic modelling, through either re-running Environment Agency hydraulic models (if available) or construction of a new model by the developer.

Table A – Indicative guide to assessment approach

<u>VULNERABILITY CLASSIFICATION</u>	<u>FLOOD ZONE</u>	<u>DEVELOPMENT TYPE</u>		
		<u>MINOR</u>	<u>SMALL-MAJOR</u>	<u>LARGE-MAJOR</u>
ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE	Zone 2	Detailed		
	Zone 3a	Detailed		
	Zone 3b	Detailed		
HIGHLY VULNERABLE	Zone 2	Intermediate/ Basic	Intermediate/ Basic	Detailed
	Zone 3a	Not appropriate development		
	Zone 3b	Not appropriate development		
MORE VULNERABLE	Zone 2	Basic	Basic	Intermediate/ Basic
	Zone 3a	Basic	Detailed	Detailed
	Zone 3b	Not appropriate development		
LESS VULNERABLE	Zone 2	Basic	Basic	Intermediate/ Basic
	Zone 3a	Basic	Basic	Detailed
	Zone 3b	Not appropriate development		
WATER COMPATIBLE	Zone 2	None		
	Zone 3a	Intermediate/ Basic		
	Zone 3b	Detailed		

NOTES:

- Minor: 1-9 dwellings/ less than 0.5 ha | Office / light industrial under 1ha | General industrial under 1 ha | Retail under 1 ha | Gypsy/traveller site between 0 and 9 pitches
- Small-Major: 10 to 30 dwellings | Office / light industrial 1ha to 5ha | General industrial 1ha to 5ha | Retail over 1ha to 5ha | Gypsy/traveller site over 10 to 30 pitches
- Large-Major: 30+ dwellings | Office / light industrial 5ha+ | General industrial 5ha+ | Retail 5ha+ | Gypsy/traveller site over 30+ pitches | any other development that creates a non residential building or development over 1000 sq m.

The assessment approach should be agreed with the Environment Agency as part of pre-planning application discussions to avoid abortive work.

3) Specific local considerations

Where the Environment Agency and the applicant and / or their consultant has agreed that a 'basic' level of assessment is appropriate the figures in Table B below can be used as a precautionary allowance for potential climate change impacts on peak 'design' (i.e. 1% annual probability) fluvial flood level rather than undertaking detailed modelling.

Table B – Local precautionary allowances for potential climate change impacts

Watercourse	Central	Higher Central	Upper
All	0.15m	0.24m	0.48m

Use of these allowances will only be accepted after discussion with the Environment Agency.

4) Fluvial food risk mitigation

Read the guidance on [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) to find out which allowances to use to **assess** the impact of climate change on flood risk.

For planning consultations where we are a statutory consultee and our [Flood risk standing advice](#) **does not** apply we use the following benchmarks to inform flood risk **mitigation** for different vulnerability classifications. **These are a guide only. We strongly recommend you contact us at the pre-planning application stage to confirm this on a case by case basis. Please note you may be charged for this advice.** For planning consultations where we are not a statutory consultee or our [Flood risk Standing advice](#) applies we recommend local planning authorities and developers use these benchmarks but we do not expect to be consulted.

- For development classed as '[Essential Infrastructure](#)' our benchmark for flood risk mitigation is for it to be designed to the '**upper end**' climate change allowance for the epoch that most closely represents the lifetime of the development, including decommissioning.
- For [highly vulnerable](#) in flood zone 2, the '**higher central**' climate change allowance is our minimum benchmark for flood risk mitigation. In sensitive locations it may be necessary to use the **upper end** allowance.
- For [more vulnerable developments](#) in flood zone 2, the '**central**' climate change allowance is our minimum benchmark for flood risk mitigation, and in flood zone 3 the '**higher central**' climate change allowance is our minimum benchmark for flood risk

mitigation. In sensitive locations it may be necessary to use the **higher central** (in flood zone 2) and the **upper end** allowance (in flood zone 3).

- For [water compatible](#) or [less vulnerable](#) development (e.g. commercial), the 'central' climate change allowance for the epoch that most closely represents the lifetime of the development is our minimum benchmark for flood risk mitigation. In sensitive locations it may be necessary to use the **higher central** (particularly in flood zone 3) to inform built in resilience.

There may be circumstances where local evidence supports the use of other data or allowances. Where you think this is the case we may want to check this data and how you propose to use it.

END.