Frequently Asked Questions

Drainage Flood Risk Management Requirements for Planning Applications

1. **Do I need to fill in Appendix C or D?**
    - If your development is in a high or medium risk area or classed as major (10 or more dwellings or over 1,000m^2 for a commercial development) then you need Appendix C. All other developments for one or more single buildings (commercial or residential) require Appendix D.

2. **How do I know if I am in a high, medium or low risk area?**
    - The Drainage and Flooding Interactive Map on our website gives information on the level of risk in the area you are interested in. Areas which are not coloured can be treated as low risk.

3. **The site I am interested in is within a non coloured area on the Drainage and Flooding Interactive Map. Why do I need to fill out an Appendix?**
    - Non coloured areas are also classed as being at low risk from surface water flooding. An Appendix is still needed to show how you will ensure your development will not increase rates of surface water runoff.

4. **Do I need an Appendix for the extension to my house?**
    - No. Only commercial extensions are required to fill out an Appendix C or D. You should, however, still refer to Table 7.1 in the Interim Guidance Document. This gives advice as to how you can minimise the impact of your proposals.

5. **I plan to simply discharge the rainwater from my development into the neighbouring watercourse. Can I do this?**
    - No. We must ensure that development proposals do not increase flood risk downstream by discharging additional surface water into existing drainage systems. Ideally, infiltration methods (soakaways etc.) should be used that result in minimal surface water leaving your site. It is important to remember that, if inappropriately managed; surface water from your site can end up causing flooding elsewhere or could make an existing problem worse.

6. **I plan to simply discharge the rainwater from my development to a public surface water sewer. Can I do this?**
    - No. Discharge of surface water to a sewer should be the last resort. We must ensure that development proposals do not increase flood risk downstream by discharging additional surface water into existing drainage systems. Ideally, infiltration methods (soakaways etc.) should be used that result in minimal surface water leaving your site. If this is not possible, discharge to a watercourse should be next in your order of preference. It is important to remember that, if inappropriately managed; surface water from your site can end up causing flooding to someone who lives downstream from your development or making an existing problem worse. Permission must be

sought from the relevant utility company in order to make a connection to a public sewer.

- Also it's worth noting that if you do not discharge your surface water into the public surface water sewer you may be entitled to a discount on your utility bill.

7. I plan to connect my drainage to a highway drain. Can I do this?

- No. The highway drainage network is only for the drainage of the highway.

8. What are SuDS?

- SuDS is an acronym for Sustainable Drainage System. These are sometimes also referred to as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. The use of SuDS is expected for all forms of development and will help to ensure that flood risk in the future is appropriately managed.

9. My development site has no record of flooding. Why do I need to include SuDS in my drainage design?

- The surface water that drains off impermeable areas all ends up somewhere. To allow new development to simply increase levels of surface water runoff will put more people, property and infrastructure at risk from flooding.

10. I want to build a soakaway. Why has the design requirement changed?

- Where draining an area larger than 100m^2, soakaways, for the disposal of surface water, should be designed in accordance with BRE Digest 365. This is to ensure that the ground is capable of accepting the flows that are proposed as a result of the development.

11. Why do I need to provide you with test results from my soakaway design at the application stage, can't this just be conditioned?

- Ground conditions vary greatly across the county and can even vary across a single site. We need to ensure that a soakaway system will work on your site and not increase flood risk. If a soakaway isn't appropriate it could save you time and money if you discover this upfront, before the rest of your site design is completed.

12. What can I do if a soakaway won't work?

- Other options such as swales, attenuation ponds, green roofs, rainwater harvesting and even water butts can be viable to help manage surface water runoff from your site. These should be sized appropriately. By using water butts you could help reduce your water bills by using them in the garden.

13. There is no public foul sewer near my site. What are my alternative options?

- You should fill out form FDA_1 and submit it with your planning application. Your first alternative option should be to use a packaged sewage treatment plant. Discharge from these can be considered clean enough to outfall straight into a watercourse or a soakaway with surface water. Effluent from a septic tank requires a second level of treatment and should be discharged into a drainage field or reed bed as described in FDA_1.

14. The permeability test I have carried out for my drainage field indicates that the ground is too permeable/ not permeable enough. What does this mean and what can I do instead.

- The permeability of the ground affects how the effluent from a septic tank is treated. If it is too permeable bacteria in the ground will not have enough time to treat the effluent before it drains away. If it is not permeable enough the ground will become saturated with untreated waste water. Alternatively you could install a raised drainage mound as shown in Building Regulations; Part H, or you could consider installing a packaged sewage treatment plant.

15. How big does my septic tank need to be?

- Building Regulations Part H states that the minimum capacity of a septic tank must be 2,700 litres. For each additional user another 180 litres must be added. To calculate the number of additional users British Water Flows and Loads- 3 recommends that a house up to and including 3 bedrooms must be sized for 5 users, with an additional 2 people per number of bedrooms above this. Therefore if you have four bedrooms your septic tank should be sized for 6 people therefore 2,700+180+180= 3,060 litres.