Managing Water Resources and Flood risk

6.24 This policy is additional to PfE Policy JP-S4 and sets out local requirements in relation to flood risk and water resources. New development is expected to follow an integrated water management approach, incorporating flood risk, water supply and quality, as well as climate resilience.

Policy S4 - Managing Water Resources and Flood Risk

Development should follow an integrated water management approach, that is not detrimental to flood risk, water supply and water quality. We will require:

Flood Risk and Drainage

a. Full regard to and compliance with the advice of the Environment Agency (or equivalent agency) and the objectives and priorities set out in the latest North West River Basin District Flood Management Plan, Irwell Catchment Plan and Rochdale Flood Risk Management Strategy;
b. Full regard to published evidence of local flood and its significance as included in Strategic Flood Risk Assessments, Surface Water Management Plans and other recognised sources of flood risk;
c. In addition to the requirements for site-specific Flood Risk Assessments (FRAs) set out in Planning Practice Guidance, an appropriate FRA for all development proposals, including changes of use, on sites greater than 0.5 ha within Critical Drainage Areas (CDAs);
d. All applications to be supported by a strategy for foul and surface water management, following the hierarchy of drainage as set of in National Guidance;
e. Sustainable drainage (SuDS) schemes to deliver multifunctional benefits in accordance with the four pillars of sustainable drainage, having regard to national standards and best practice.

Water Quality

f. Development must not have an adverse impact on water quality, and where practicable, take opportunities for water quality enhancement, in conjunction with the policy on watercourses and their setting;
g. Development within Groundwater Source Protection Zones must accord with the latest national guidance on Groundwater Protection;

Water Efficiency

h. Residential developments should achieve as a minimum the tighter water efficiency standard of 110 litres/person/day; and
i. All major non-residential development shall incorporate water efficiency measures so that predicted per capita consumption does not exceed the levels set out in the applicable BREEAM 'Excellent' standard.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-S4 Flood Risk and the Water Environment

Reasoned Justification

6.25 Rochdale has experienced significant flooding incidents in the past, most notably on Boxing Day 2015 following Storm Eva, with some parts of the borough at higher risk of flooding. With climate change leading to more extreme weather events, the risk of flooding in the borough will continue to be a significant issue.

6.26 The policy in relation to flood risk is informed by national and local guidance, and evidence including the Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and the Greater Manchester Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP). Littleborough and much of Heywood have been identified as Critical Drainage Areas (CDAs) as areas of high risk of surface water flooding.

6.27 Applicants will be required to consult with the water and sewerage undertaker to confirm the nature and extent of any flood risk from sewers and reservoirs.

6.28 The sustainable drainage hierarchy is defined in the Government's National Standards for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)[3]. SuDS should be designed in accordance with best practice as specified in local and national guidance, including Greater Manchester's Sustainable Drainage Guide (2024) and National Standards for SuDS (2025) unless superseded. The four 'pillars' of SuDS design broadly fit into four categories: water quantity, water quality, amenity and biodiversity. Therefore, increasing the emphasis on amenity and biodiversity benefits alongside the main drivers for SuDS of controlling water quantity and water quality.

6.29 Currently all the borough's river waterbodies are failing to reach 'good' ecological status as established by the Water Framework directive. It is important to ensure that new development does not cause further deterioration to water bodies in the borough and wherever possible can support improvements.

6.30 Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) are areas often used for public drinking water supply purposes so preventing pollution is important for public health. SPZs are defined on the Environment Agency website[4] which includes some parts of the borough of Rochdale. Where necessary, applicants will be required to undertake a risk assessment (quantitative and qualitative) of the impact on the groundwater environment and public water supply. Development will only be acceptable where it is demonstrated to the Local Planning Authority that there will be no unacceptable impact on the groundwater environment and public water supply.

6.31 Development proposals on land used for public water supply catchment purposes will be required to consult with the relevant water undertaker. The first preference will be for proposals to be located away from land used for public water supply purposes. Where proposals are brought forward on catchment land used for public water supply, careful consideration must be given to the location of the proposed development and a risk

[3] National Standards for SuDS National standards for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) - GOV.UK
[4] Groundwater Source Protection Zones Groundwater source protection zones (SPZs) - GOV.UK

assessment of the impact on public water supply may be required with the identification and implementation of any required mitigation measures.

6.32 The PfE plan notes that district local plans should consider setting a tighter water efficiency standard where there is a local need. The effects of climate change, a growing population and the requirements of modern industry are putting increased pressure on water resources. Increased water efficiency will also help to reduce carbon emissions from water treatment and contribute to the borough's emissions targets.