

**South Gloucestershire Council
Core Strategy**

**Flood Risk - Sequential Test
Information Note**

March 2011

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Policy background

The aim of national Planning Policy Statement 25 (Development and Flood Risk) is “to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages of the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and direct development away from areas at highest risk”. Where development is necessary, it must be ensured that it is safe for its lifetime, without increasing the flood risk elsewhere.

PPS25 indicates that the Sequential Test should be applied by local planning authorities (LPAs) to demonstrate that there are no reasonably available sites in areas with a lower probability of flooding that would be appropriate to the type of development or land use proposed.

If, following the application of the Sequential Test, it is not possible, consistent with wider sustainability objectives, for development to be located in zones of lower probability of flooding, the PPS25 states that the Exception Test can be applied.

The national Planning Policy Statement 25 Practice Guide states that a LPA must demonstrate that it has considered the range of possible options in conjunction with the flood zone information from the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and vulnerability of development and has applied the Sequential Test, and where necessary the Exception Test, in the site allocation process. Evidence should be provided through the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process.

The South Gloucestershire Core Strategy

Alternative strategic development locations/sites have been considered through the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process and front loading in accordance with PPG12 (Local Spatial Planning). The SA process carried out during the preparation of the South Gloucestershire Core Strategy also fulfils the requirement of European Directive 2001/42/EC to undertake a process known as Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

Flooding evidence to enable the Sequential Test to be undertaken included:

- the Council’s Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Level 1 Report;
- the Council’s environmental constraints evidence submitted to South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Examination in Public;
- evidence provided in the South West RSS SA Report;
- technical evidence provided by the Council’s developer partners; and
- specific local knowledge provided by those who engaged in the Core Strategy and SA processes.

As the result of the above consideration through the SA and Core Strategy processes the Council considers it has complied with the requirements of the Sequential Test in relation to the identification of locations for strategic development identified in the South Gloucestershire Core Strategy.

The Council intends to produce a more detailed Core Strategy topic paper on the Sequential Test, which will incorporate further information from the South Gloucestershire Level 2 SFRA, which is currently under preparation. The topic paper and the Level 2 SFRA Report will form part of the Core Strategy evidence base.