

MARTIN WRIGHT ASSOCIATES

Coastal & Flood Risk
Management Engineers

MWA INFORMATION NOTE

Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments

OVERVIEW

The Environment Agency (EA) has recently issued the document, 'Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments 'Living Draft' Guidance for Lead Local Flood Authorities' (dated May 2010).

The document can be downloaded at <http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/GEHO0410BSLS-E-E.pdf>

The aim of the guidance is to support and assist Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFA's) to meet their duties to manage flood risk as required by the Flood Risk Regulations (FRR) 2009.

These assessments are a vital and critical step in our understanding of flood risk and will ultimately be the foundation for future investment and action plans for flood risk management. To assist LLFA's, Martin Wright Associates have produced this brief summary of the Guidance.

WHAT IS A PFRA?

The PFRA is an initial screening exercise that aims to review historical and potential local flood risk through Preliminary Assessment Maps, the preparation of a Preliminary Assessment Report and the identification and determination of Flood Risk Areas (FRA's). The FRR 2009 deadline for the completion of this work has been set for 22nd June 2011.

FUNDING

Welsh Assembly Government have indicated that specific funding will be made available to Local Authorities in Wales to help them compile the PFRA.

EUROPEAN DIRECTIVE

European Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks came into effect on 26 November 2007. The aim of the Directive is to reduce the likelihood and consequence of flooding by establishing a common framework for understanding and managing flood risk. In England & Wales the Directive has been transposed into the Flood Risk Regulations 2009, which can be downloaded at http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2009/uksi_20093042_en_1

Preparing a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) is stages 1 & 2 of a four stage process that will produce detailed Flood Risk Management Plans for all areas at significant risk of flooding. The whole process needs to be complete by June 2015, however Stages 1 & 2 - the PFRA - has to be complete by June 2011.

THE REGULATIONS & THE GUIDANCE

The Regulations adopt a new institutional structure for the understanding and management of flood risk. The EA's 'Living Draft' has been prepared to raise awareness and inform LLFAs as early as possible about what is needed and by when.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS REQUIRED

The advice provided suggests the following immediate actions by LLFAs are necessary:

- Establish governance and partnership arrangements for PFRA work
- Establish a framework and systems for the collation, storage and maintenance of flood risk information
- Assemble available local flood risk information
- Analyse national data and prepare supplementary local data that should be used in addition to EA national data sets.

It is also recommended that arrangements are put in place for Preliminary Assessment Reports to be reviewed by Local Overview and Scrutiny Committees between January and June 2011.

EXCEPTION OPTIONS

It should be noted the Regulations contain two 'exception' options which effectively provide an exemption from preparing Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments. LLFAs should consider these options and their implications:

- 1) an assessment has already been undertaken - or will be completed by 22nd December 2010 - enabling the identification of areas of significant flood risk
- 2) an authority decides to produce Flood Hazard Maps and Flood Risk Maps, together with Flood Risk Management Plans, for their area.

ONGOING ACTIONS

The EA is undertaking further work now and a consultation is planned this summer on how 'significant risk' is determined. Final guidance on identifying Flood Risk Areas is due to be published in Autumn 2010.

It is strongly recommended that the intervening time is used by LLFAs to complete the essential tasks described previously, and in the 'Living Draft'. The EA will submit a progress report to DEFRA and Welsh Assembly Government at the end of November 2010, which reflects the national importance attached to this initiative.

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT REPORT

A template for the Preliminary Assessment Report is available in the EA's guidance. The Preliminary Assessment Report must describe:

- The general approach and information used
- Historic flooding in the area with significant consequences that could re-occur
- The assessment of risk from future (potential) flooding and factors taken into account
- The review of the default Flood Risk Areas that will be produced by the EA
- Proposed Flood Risk Areas
- Communication with partners
- Proposals to support review every 6 years

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT MAPS

Preliminary Assessment Maps have been prepared by the EA and provided to the LLFAs for information only. LLFAs are not required to undertake any additional work on the maps.

IDENTIFYING FLOOD RISK AREAS

It is important to note that future updates to the 'Living Draft' guidance will provide more detailed information for LLFAs to review and possibly modify the default Flood Risk Areas that the EA will be producing later in 2010. There is no immediate action required of LLFAs until new guidance and default Flood Risk Areas are available.

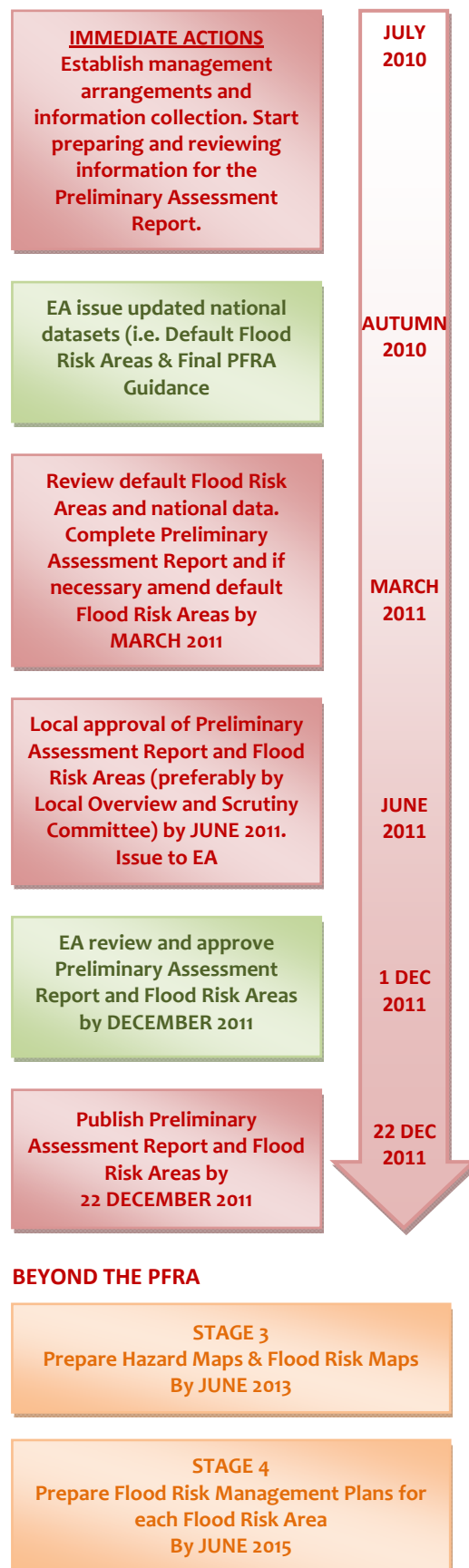
SCRUTINY AND PUBLICATION

As the competent authority, the EA has been given a role reviewing, coordinating and publishing outputs for the Flood Risk Regulations. Whilst the EA needs to ensure compliance, existing LLFA processes will be used as the primary tool for review.

GLOSSARY

PFRA	Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment
LLFA	Lead Local Flood Authority
FRR	Flood Risk Regulations
FRA	Flood Risk Area

DELIVERY PLAN FOR COMPLETION OF PFRA



MWA CAPABILITIES

We are a small Chester-based company working throughout the UK. We employ around 25 engineers and technicians with vast experience in flood risk assessment work and hydraulic modelling. Indeed the majority of our staff have substantial Local Government experience (including development control), are used to working to tight timescales, and have good links to the national coastal groups and regional EA offices.

We would be more than happy to visit and discuss your needs, including staff secondment, without any cost or commitment. We are confident that we can offer you a bespoke service, second to none in both quality and cost. We have partnered with many clients across the UK and can tailor our service to suit each individual client's need.

For further up to date information about Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments, or for more details about Martin Wright Associates, please visit our website www.martinwrightassociates.com for further details.

If you would like to speak to someone, or have someone call in to see you, Martin Wright or Dave Collyer are your initial contacts. They can be contacted on 01244 677656 or via email at mail@martinwrightassociates.com

LINKS TO DOCUMENT DOWNLOADS

- Flood Risk Regulations 2009
- Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments 'Living Draft' Guidance for Lead Local Flood Authorities'
- Appendices for the Guidance
- Preliminary Assessment Map: West Wales River Basin
- Preliminary Assessment Map: Dee River Basin
- Preliminary Assessment Map: Severn River Basin