

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Streetpride Service

Policy for Managing Data Held for Flood Risk Management Purposes

Introduction

The exercise of Flood Risk Management (FRM) functions necessitates the use and storage of large amounts of data in various types and in various formats.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Data Protection Act 1998, the Council's Guidance Notes and the Information and Security Policy.

The purpose of this policy is to define in more detail how the FRM data will be managed to comply with the above policies and procedures.

Photographs

Ideally, information such as location, date, time, photographer and what the photograph shows should be available within the metadata, the file name or a photograph register. Photographs not taken by drainage team staff shall not be used or distributed unless explicitly approved by the photographer or photograph owner.

Where possible, photographs should not have any identifiable person/s within them, unless permission has been received by the person/s before hand (this then should be included within the notes). Any photographs taken which includes identifiable person/s should be doctored to remove them.

The organisation of any photographs will be the responsibility of all members of the Drainage Team.

Personal Data

Flood management is primarily concerned with risk to land and property, rather than individuals. Information relating to property is not covered by the data protection act and therefore where possible records should not include information relating to individuals.

Flood Records, Flood Mapping and Modelling

Data from past flood events and predicted flooding is essential for managing flood risk. As a general principle, this information should be shared as widely as possible to all who have a legitimate use for it.

In the case of residential properties in particular, there is sometimes a reluctance for flooding to be reported and recorded because owners are concerned about the value and saleability of their properties. Prediction of flood risk to properties which have not previously flooded could also have a detrimental effect on property values. Effective management of flood risk is considered by government justify the publication of results from flood modelling, despite the above concerns.

It is essential that flood records are correct and accurate. Any information on flood risk made publicly available should be accompanied by clear information about how the results have been obtained and an indication of the reliability of the results. Results should not be presented in format which suggests a greater accuracy than is achievable. For example, flood risk data is not normally sufficiently accurate to determine whether individual properties are at risk, so should not be presented on a map with a large scale map which depicts individual properties.

Other Organisations' Data

The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 imposes duties on LLFAs to co-operate with other risk management authorities and powers to request information in connection with its flood management functions from another person or organisation. Reciprocal arrangements are in place with the Council's principal partners, other Risk Management Authorities, and organisations such as Environment Agency, Network Rail and the Canals and Rivers Trust, to exchange relevant information.

Where other organisation's data is held on the Council's records, it shall only be used in accordance with the licence agreement. Third party requests for access to data owned by others will be referred to the data owners.

Asset Record and Register

The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 imposes a duty on LLFAs to establish and maintain a register of structures or features which it considers are likely to have a significant effect on local flood risk. Information on ownership will also be held on the register. The register will be available for inspection. The LLFA has discretion to set a local indication of "significance" to determine which assets it records on the register.

The obligation to record ownership and also to make the register public legally obliges the LLFA to make some personal data publicly available. The extent of personal data publicly available will be the minimum amount required by law and any further personal data will be restricted in accordance with usual protocols.

For further details see the Policy for Designating Flood Defence Assets.

Retention of Records

Flooding risk is dependent on topography and land profiles, which change little over the years, so flood records which are many years old are often relevant. Drains, sewers and culverts have long design lives, so construction and record drawings contain information which may be useful many decades later. Normal retention schedules are therefore not appropriate for this type of data. Only documents containing relevant information should be retained and other types of data should be disposed of in accordance with usual protocols.

The CDM Regulations require a Health and Safety File to be produced and kept for the lifetime of the asset.

Metadata should be recorded where possible to indicate the reliability of the recorded information. Most of the records are not definitive records and are not regularly updated. Everybody who has access to these records need to be aware of their status and if they are shared with third parties, a disclaimer must be attached indicating their limitations.