



Surface water drainage and ordinary watercourse advice service

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Date: 1st April 2024

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1. Introduction

Buckinghamshire Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority operates an advice service for surface water drainage matters on planning applications and on land drainage matters relating to ordinary watercourse land drainage consent applications prior to submission to the relevant determining authority.

This document sets out the terms and conditions of the Surface Water Drainage and Ordinary Watercourse Advice Service.

Early engagement with the Lead Local Flood Authority is highly recommended for all sites. It provides prospective applicants with the opportunity to discuss proposals and refine their designs prior to submitting a formal application, for either planning permission or land drainage consent. By having these discussions early in the process, it can lead to higher quality applications that have a better chance of success and can expedite the decision-making process after submission.

2. Expectations

What are the benefits of using the advice service?

- Confidence that proposals are thorough and contain minimum required information.
- Identification of relevant national and local policies as well as local design criteria that needs to be considered.
- Emphasise potential deficiencies in data, information, or pertinent evidence, and reference where engagement with other approving authorities may be necessary, such as the Environment Agency or Internal Drainage Board.
- Could potentially minimise the need for costly amendments to the design and layout of proposals in the later stages, if the LLFA finds the proposals unsatisfactory at this stage.

What is required from the applicant?

Whilst it is appreciated that at the time of requesting advice, you may not have all the information required for an application, however, to ensure that applicants get the most from this service, we have set out the minimum level of information that is required as part of a submission.

Surface water drainage advice

Please ensure that you are able to provide the below information at the time of submission to ensure your request is processed:

- Location (incl. National Grid Reference)

- A brief description of the proposed development
- Site plan
- Site details – total site area, existing impermeable area and proposed impermeable area
- Type of application intended to be submitted (Outline, Reserved Matters, Full, Discharge of Conditions)
- Drainage layout
- Information on method of surface water disposal (e.g. ground investigations)

We would recommend a pre-application advice request is accompanied by the following information (if available):

- Existing drainage plan including overland flow paths
- A topographical survey (mAOD)
- Details of site constraints
- Surface water drainage strategy
- Flood Risk Assessment (if applicable)
- Any further information the applicant feels that the LLFA should be aware of

Ordinary watercourse advice

For pre-application advice in the form of a virtual meeting or a site visit, please ensure that you are able to provide the below information at the time of submission to ensure your request is processed:

- Location (incl. National Grid Reference)
- A description of and requirement for the proposed works
- Location plan
- Site plan showing the extent of the proposed structure/alteration in relation to the watercourse

We would recommend a pre-application advice request is also accompanied by the following information (if available):

- Existing and proposed cross-sectional drawings of the watercourse
 - Clearly showing any proposed structure/alteration
- Existing and proposed long-sectional drawings of the watercourse
 - Bank and bank levels to be clearly shown
- A topographic survey of the watercourse (mAOD)
- Construction drawings of the proposed structure (where applicable)
- Photographs of the location and surrounding area
- Any further information the applicant feels that the LLFA should be aware of

For hydraulic modelling review pre-application advice, please ensure that you are able to provide the below information at the time of submission to ensure your request is processed:

- Location (incl. National Grid Reference)
- A description of the existing watercourse situation and details of the proposed works/alterations
- Location plan
- Site plan showing the extent of the proposed structure/alteration in relation to the watercourse
- A topographic survey of the watercourse (mAOD)

To enable us to be able to provide advice on a model specification, please ensure this is inclusive of:

- The purpose of the model
- The proposed hydrology
 - Method of applying flows (these should be derived using FEH methods)
 - Rainfall events to be tested (as a minimum we expect this will include 10-year, 30-year and 100-year)
- Input data details, which may include:
 - River gauging (if applicable)
 - Flood history
 - Mapping data (used to inform model surface roughness)
 - Any existing models
 - Topographic survey data of the channel / floodplain
 - Topographic data from LiDAR (to inform surface topography)
- Proposed hydraulic modelling
 - Modelling software to be used
 - Type of model (i.e. 1D or a 1D/2D linked model)
 - Scenarios to test (baseline, proposed, sensitivity tests, blockage scenarios etc.)

To enable us to be able to provide advice on a hydraulic model output report, please ensure this is inclusive of:

- The modelling software used
- The type of model used (i.e. 1D or 1D/2D linked)
- Modelling parameters and boundary conditions
- A boundary plan
- Details of hydrology assessment
- Details of the data used to inform the model, e.g.:
 - Existing models
 - Topographical survey / LiDAR
 - Mapping source
 - Number of cross-sections taken (with location indicated)

- Details of any upstream and/or downstream restrictions to flows
- Pre-development scenario, including a description of watercourse dimensions
- Proposed scenarios, including of channel and structure parameters
- Maps of pre-development & post development flood extents and depths
- Tabulated model outputs, inclusive of return period, section reference, and flood levels (m AoD) in both the pre and post development scenarios
- Model files
 - Please note that these do not need to be provided upfront and requirement for the model files will be confirmed by LLFA team following pre-application submission

3. Charges

The charging schedule for the Surface Water Drainage and Ordinary Watercourse Advice Service is set out below:

Surface Water Drainage		
Type of application	Service	Fee
3 to 9 dwellings / 250 to 499m ² commercial floorspace	Written advice	£297
	Virtual meeting with written advice	£355
	Site visit with written advice	£442
10 to 24 dwellings / 500 to 999m ² commercial floorspace	Written advice	£369
	Virtual meeting with written advice	£430
	Site visit with written advice	£521
25 to 199 dwellings / 1000 to 4999m ² commercial floorspace	Written advice	£616
	Virtual meeting with written advice	£692
	Site visit with written advice	£844
More than 200 dwellings / over 5000m ² commercial floorspace	Written advice	£694
	Virtual meeting with written advice	£779
	Site visit with written advice	£991

Ordinary watercourse		
Type of application	Service	Fee
Up to 3 structures/ alterations on a watercourse	1 hour virtual meeting with written advice	£248
	Site visit with written advice	£499
4-6 structures/ alterations on a watercourse	1 hour virtual meeting with written advice	£352
	Site visit with written advice	£627
7 or more structures/ alterations on a watercourse	1 hour virtual meeting with written advice	£575
	Site visit with written advice	£858
Hydraulic Model Review	Model specification review	£116/hr
	Model outputs review	£116/hr

An initial fee of £116 will required upfront for either service chosen under the Hydraulic

Model Review. A fee of £116 per hour will then be charged and invoiced depending on time spent on review. This will be discussed with you upon receipt of application.

The fees will be reviewed on an annual basis and will be uplifted in line with the Standard Retail Index.

Please note that all fees paid are non-refundable. The LLFA reserves the right to levy additional charges, i.e. additional work is subsequently required which may not have been included in the scope of the service; applicants will be advised of this prior to the work being undertaken.

4. Standards of service

We endeavour to provide advice that is in line with relevant national and local policies as well as related technical guidance, our local design criteria, industry best practice and our [Culvert Policy](#).

Any advice provided by the LLFA under the Surface water drainage and Ordinary watercourse advice service is based on the current extent of the knowledge of the LLFA and the information provided at that time. Advice is therefore made without prejudice.

What to expect as an applicant

We will respond to the advice request within 5 working days of receipt to confirm the following details:

- The advice request has been accepted by the Lead Local Flood Authority.
- Name and contact details of the officer handling your case.
- Where insufficient information has been provided to support the provision of advice, we will clearly set out the required information that the applicant must supply.

Please note that failure to provide the required information will result in a delay to the timescales set out below.

Written advice

Please note that this service is available only for Surface Water Drainage Advice.

We will provide written advice within 15 working days of receipt of a completed advice request.

Virtual meeting with written advice

We will arrange for the virtual meeting to take place within 10 working days from receipt of the required information. The written advice will be issued 5 days after the virtual meeting.

If a virtual meeting and/or the follow up written advice is postponed for any reason, we will try to re-arrange within 5 working days, however this is situation and resource dependent.

Site visit

We will arrange for the site to take place within 10 working days from receipt of the required information. The written advice will be issued 5 days after the site visit.

If a site visit and/or the follow up written advice is postponed for any reason, we will try to re-arrange within 5 working days, however this is situation and resource dependent.

5. Limitations of advice

The LLFA will accept one round of communications on points of clarification only. If the applicant requests further discussions following round of communication, this will be chargeable via the Surface Water Drainage and Ordinary Watercourse Advice Service and the applicant can apply via our website.

Engagement with the Surface Water Drainage and Ordinary Watercourse advice service provided by the LLFA does not constitute a formal response or a decision should a formal application be submitted in the future.

The Council's advice is current as of the date it is given. We cannot guarantee that new issues will not arise should a formal application be submitted, which may alter our response.

In addition, consideration given to any advice issued by the LLFA may decline over time where more up to date data, new information and any change to industry best practice and national policy may occur. Therefore, the advice issued will be valid for 12 months only from the date of issue.

6. Contact Details

Sustainable Drainage Team / Flood Management Team

Buckinghamshire Council,
Walton Street Offices,
Walton Street,
Aylesbury,
Buckinghamshire,
HP20 1UA.

Sustainable drainage team - suds@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Flood management team – floodmanagement@buckinghamshire.gov.uk