Climate change allowance note

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), sets out how the planning system should help minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to the impacts of climate change. Climate change is likely to increase peak rainfall intensity and river flow and this could result in more frequent and severe floods events. On the 19th February 2016, the updated climate change allowances were released to support NPPF.

The Lead Local Flood Authority is now using the updated climate change allowance as the benchmark for the advice we give as a statutory consultee for all major development in relation to the management of surface water drainage. These changes apply as of 19th February 2016 and will be applied to all applications validated on or after this date.

Therefore all Flood Risk Assessments and surface water Drainage Strategies for planning applications validated on or after the 19th February 2016 should apply the updated climate change allowances when calculating peak rainfall intensity.

Previously, we required the detailed drainage calculations for all rainfall return periods up to and including the 1 in 100 year + 30% allowed climate change. We now require all flood risk assessments and strategic flood risk assessments, to assess both the central and upper end allowances to understand the range of impact. The central and upper end allowances depend upon the total potential change anticipated as defined in the table below.

Table extracted from the detailed guidance to support the NPPF

Applies across all of England	Total potential change anticipated for the '2020s' (2015 to 2039)	Total potential change anticipated for the '2050s' (2040 to 2069)	Total potential change anticipated for the '2080s' (2070 to 2115)
Upper end	10%	20%	40%
Central	5%	10%	20%

Table 2 peak rainfall intensity allowance in small and urban catchments (use 1961 to 1990 baseline)

Looking at worst case scenario, for the design SuDS feature we expect the upper end allowance to be applied. Despite this recommendation, should the 20% allowance for climate change be applied to the drainage design we need to see clear justification for that figure.

As an example, for a development with a lifetime that extends beyond 2060, a range of calculations must be presented between 20% and 40%, and the system must be able to cater a rainfall event up to and including the 1 in 100 year + 40% allowance for climate change.

For all applications validated before the 19th February 2016, we will continue to require the previous climate change allowance (30%).

We advise applicants to refer to the climate change allowances pages on the gov.uk website for details on which climate change allowances to use :
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adapting-to-climate-change-for-risk-management-authorities