



**THAMES GATEWAY SOUTH ESSEX PARTNERSHIP
STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

Q: What is the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)?

A: An SFRA is a high-level assessment of flood risk carried out by or for planning authorities to meet the needs of Government planning legislation, and help the authorities deliver sustainable development.

Q: Who commissioned the SFRA and therefore who owns the resulting information?

A: The project has been carried out by Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership (TGSEP), on behalf of: Castle Point Borough, Basildon District, Thurrock Council, Southend on Sea Borough, and Rochford District councils. Copyright is owned by TGSEP Ltd.

Q: What is the main purpose of an SFRA?

A: The main purpose of an SFRA is to enable local authorities to establish if development is appropriate in certain areas in line with statutory and local planning requirements.

Q: How likely is it that my home would become flooded?

A: The study does not look into the likelihood of the flooding of people's homes. The Thames tidal defences already offer a very high standard of protection. Instead it looks at consequences of a failure of those defences and the impact that failure could have on the land behind them. This is in accordance with the Government's Planning and Policy statement No25 which takes a precautionary approach to planning and risk.

Q: Why have the breach locations been chosen in the study?

A: The breach locations do not identify particular locations that are weak, but if they were to breach at these locations the flood waters would be unimpeded and this fits in with the precautionary planning approach.

Q: Can I use the results from the SFRA to directly assess the flood risk to my house?

A: Not directly. The output from the modelling is not property specific, but is related to the ground terrain and no direct inference of flood risk to an existing property can be made. Specific construction details, eg floor levels of houses, are not taken into account. The SFRA is a forward-looking report to help influence future placement of development.

Q: Can the findings of the SFRA be used by developers for assessing the appropriateness of building in a certain area – a site-level flood risk assessment?

A: The SFRA will give an appreciation of the level of risk and knowing the level of risk will guide a developer through the process of producing a site-level flood risk assessment. But it does not give sufficient detail to be directly used at site level.

Q: Will the findings of the SFRA change the Environment Agency's Flood Map of the Thames Gateway South Essex?

A: No - the Flood Maps produced by the Environment Agency are not changed by the results of the SFRA.

Q: Will the results of the SFRA have any impact on my house insurance?

A: No - the data is not used by the Association of British Insurers (ABI) members, and since the results do not change the Environment Agency Published Flood Maps, no additional properties are shown as being at risk.

Q: How was the TGSEP's SFRA funded?

A: As the Thames Gateway project is part of the Communities and Local Government department, formerly known as the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the main study was eligible for ODPM funding. The council-specific additions were funded by each authority from local funds.

Q: How will the results from the SFRA be made available?

A: Each local authority will have a link to the SFRA on their websites. TGSE has a dedicated website (see below), which will explore the issues in greater depth and provide controlled access to some of the data. Hard copies will not be offered owing to the cost and amount of printing required.

Q: Who in the public and private sectors is likely to want to use this information?

A: The main audience for the product are the local authorities, Environment Agency, regional organisations such as the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) for whom forward spatial planning is an issue, and for developers who may be considering developments within the areas covered by the study.

Q: How would they want to use this information?

A: For planning authorities it will help them to encourage development in the most appropriate areas; for developers it will give them an appreciation of the risk and therefore the amount of work required to address flood risk in order to develop in that area.

Q: I need to provide a Flood Risk Assessment for a specific site. Can I get access to the Modelling?

A: Since the data was supplied to the consultants free of charge for public benefit, the models cannot be used for commercial gain without the appropriate licensing fees being paid to TGSE and other organisations such as the Environment Agency.

Q: Are the results of the SFRA approved and recognised by the Environment Agency?

A: Yes. Much of the work of the SFRA has been assisted and guided by Environment Agency involvement with the project from a very early stage. It will be using the results to assist its Development Control/Planning considerations.

Q: I wish to produce a planning application for a site in the TGSE area, what should I do in relation to flood risk?

A: As a first stop go to the TGSE SFRA web pages at www.tgessex.co.uk/sfra (tbc). This will help you assess the level of Flood Risk Assessment you need to consider. It is designed as a technical website for use by planning authorities and developers.

Q: Is global warming and rising sea levels going to have an impact on flood risk?

A: Government guidelines require the impacts of climate change to be addressed as part of the planning process. As part of the SFRA climate change has been taken into account with the modelling and mapping.

Q: What weather conditions would provoke a breach in the Thames Tidal defences?

A: With such a high standard of tidal defences, specific weather conditions are not likely to provoke a breach. A breach is more likely to be caused by a physical failure and weather conditions are unlikely to cause this as the Thames estuary is quite sheltered.

Q: What reassurance can you give people that South Essex won't be flooded?

A: Despite the high defence standards of the Thames Tidal defences nobody can guarantee that a failure will never occur but we do now know as a result of the SFRA what the consequence of such failures would be.

Q: How will this help the emergency services?

A: Emergency services such as the fire and rescue service could use the information to help them in formulating their emergency access routes and plans.

Q: How will the people moving into new homes in the Gateway in the future benefit from this study?

A: They can be certain that their new home is part of a sustainable development that has been built taking into account flood risk, and conforms to the latest legislation.

