
EXECUTIVE REPORT

Background

The brief for the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study requires the development of policies appropriate to the provision of future drainage services in the region. These policies would assist Local Authorities to comply with their legal responsibilities, their planning and development objectives and would, in so far as practicable, conform to good international practice. A particular requirement from the study is that policies adopted across the region should facilitate a uniform and consistent approach to urban drainage infrastructure planning, design, construction and operation.

Policy Objectives

This volume of the policies is entitled “New Development” and is concerned with identification of similar approaches for the Local Authorities to adopt as to how drainage infrastructure for new development is managed. This requires an approach based on Best Management Practices (BMPs) from international experience, so that the following objectives are achieved:

- ◆ Emphasis on the role of drainage management in addressing environmental legislation, such as the Water Framework Directive, and systems set up to promote that role;
- ◆ Emphasis to developers and the public at large that sustainable drainage systems is mandatory, as a corner-stone on achieving environmental improvement for the region’s watercourses;
- ◆ New design approaches will be implemented to support SuDS and stormwater control in general;
- ◆ Liaison between Council Planning and Drainage Departments ensuring that drainage infrastructure for new developments will be co-ordinated;
- ◆ Management of planning applications, and drainage involvement will be co-ordinated;
- ◆ Ensuring that planning approvals will only be given to sustainable developments, avoiding floodplains, overloaded drainage systems and the like;
- ◆ Taking in charge procedures and requirements will be consistent;
- ◆ Taking in charge requirements for sustainable urban drainage systems will be consistent;
- ◆ Specifications and practices for design, materials and construction will be consistent;
- ◆ Drainage construction quality will be improved, thus reducing the current high occurrence of illegitimate flows in the drainage system;
- ◆ Drainage standards and practices will be periodically reviewed to take account of changes in technology, industry practices and local requirements;
- ◆ Promoting electronic management of drainage matters, such as planning applications and taking-in-charge, to improve efficiency within the Council departments and provide better service to the public;
- ◆ Promoting drainage systems as assets to be understood, protected and preserved for the environment and future generations.

Policy Details

Basic Definitions

Basic system definitions, for example the meanings of the terms “sewers” and “drains” are contained in current guideline documents, such as the Building Regulations. These documents contain basic policy principles, such as for separation of foul and storm drainage, which are proposed to remain.

Planning Implications

The principle of sustainable development required in the Planning and Development Act, 2000 is proposed to remain. The Regional Policies seek to fully support this principle, and the Act’s requirement that drainage considerations be included in the planning process.

The Act also seeks to systemise the planning application process, which these Policies support. The objectives of the policy are thus to:

- Ensure that the Planning Department maintains control of the planning process, and manages developments through use of a planning database;
- Ensure that proposed development is compatible with existing and proposed drainage infrastructure;
- Ensure that the Drainage Department agrees the requirements for the new development;
- Ensure that the Planning Department understands any constraints imposed by the Drainage Department on new development;
- Ensure that the Planning Department imposes any requirements specified by the Drainage Department related to new development;
- Ensure that the Developer understands any requirements for the design, construction and taking-in-charge of new development;
- Ensure that all drainage construction complies with satisfactory design and construction standards;
- Ensure that all records of new development are satisfactorily managed.

The Policy includes four procedures, corresponding to the phases in the life of a typical development.

The first procedure for **Development Plan Liaison** deals with the involvement of the Drainage Department (and other utility departments) in the production of the Council’s Development Plan.

The second procedure for **Planning Application Procedures and Approvals** covers the selection and review of planning applications, and approval by the Local Authority of the Developer’s Planning Application. The third procedure for **Drainage Construction and Connection** is concerned with the monitoring of site work, connections to the public system and associated certification.

The fourth procedure for **Taking in Charge** deals with the taking over of drainage from the developer, the final inspections and completion of agreements.

The purpose of the procedures, and their linkage to the Regional Drainage GIS, is to systemise the flow of information relating to planning decisions. The proposed management of information will allow drainage engineers to reach decisions in the shortest period, and with the greatest confidence in the correctness of their advice.

Design

The Policy is to maintain current guidelines for design of small residential developments, with the recommendation that daily flow allowances per dwelling be reduced in recognition of reduced occupancy trends.

All new development will incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) unless it can be demonstrated that such facilities are not feasible. Where SuDS cannot be provided, the developer must provide alternative means of dealing with pollutants.

The Policy for stormwater systems will incorporate the principles of SuDS, and amend the existing DCC publications "Stormwater Management Policy for Developers" and "Stormwater Management Policy Technical Guidelines".

Specifications

In view of the current lack of an Irish water industry specification, the Policy is that a Specification Committee be set up to produce such documents, and periodically update to reflect developments in technology and working practices.

Policy Acceptance and Implementation

Acceptance of new policies for urban drainage across the region will require implementation at various levels, as follows:

- ◆ **Drainage Departments:** Council Departments to raise its profile in planning and management of drainage infrastructure, including flood risk assessment and stormwater management;
- ◆ **Drainage Involvement in Planning:** Council Departments should adopt the policies and procedures to co-ordinate drainage infrastructure with new development;
- ◆ **Development Plans:** Should make allowance for drainage aspects, including provision of drainage infrastructure, risk of flooding and isolation of basements;
- ◆ **Council Liaison:** liaison committee to be maintained to implement Study recommendations with the ongoing role of agreeing future drainage matters for the region;
- ◆ **Public Liaison:** Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to be included in all new development and promoted by the setting up of a Regional Working Party of all stakeholders;
- ◆ **Design:** Design standards and emerging Codes of Practice will be required to ensure co-ordinated and consistent implementation of drainage systems;
- ◆ **Construction:** Requires that appropriate specifications are developed for the construction of drainage systems to satisfactory quality standards, including testing/acceptance procedures and standards of completion;
- ◆ **Drainage Department Management:** Most critical of all will be the effect on the Local Authority Drainage Departments of the policies on monitoring of construction, requiring additional staff resources or use of agencies. The setting up of a Drainage Inspectorate on a Regional basis should be considered.