

Topic Paper 11 - Fire and Rescue Infrastructure

August 2004

This document is one of the supporting topic papers of West Berkshire Council's supplementary guidance series 'Delivering Investment from Growth – West Berkshire Council's approach to securing developer contributions towards local infrastructure, services and amenities'. It is intended as a guide for landowners, developers and residents and sets out how the Council will deal with planning applications where a contribution towards fire and rescue infrastructure will be sought.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Council considers that Fire and Rescue infrastructure should not be distinguished from other items of community infrastructure necessitated by a development. Where development would result in increased risk or the extension of developed areas then contributions will normally be sought to safeguard the provision of adequate fire and rescue infrastructure.

2.0 Assessing the Contribution

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2.2 Water supply works may be needed to fulfil the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's duty to ensure the provision of an adequate supply of water for fire fighting. Requirements for the provision of fire hydrants and for other works necessary to ensure adequate supplies of water, in terms of both volume and pressure, may be sought through a planning obligation. Developers should bear in mind that these requirements may relate to small-scale developments, particularly in more isolated locations without adequate infrastructure.

2.3 The nature of risk will vary according to the type, density and location of development and each development will need to be assessed on an individual basis. The following guidelines are intended to inform and assist landowners and developers in assessing potential fire and rescue obligations;

- In residential areas fire hydrants should generally be positioned at 400 metre intervals and no dwelling should be more than 200 metres from the nearest hydrant. In industrial areas hydrants should be positioned at 250 metre intervals and not more than 125 metres from any development. Fire hydrants covering public buildings, hotels, and commercial developments should be spaced at distances determined on a risk assessment basis defined by the fire service.

- The cost of providing a new fire hydrant on a new water main will vary depending upon the size of the main with an average cost in the region of £450 (excluding VAT) in 2000
- The size of water mains provided is determined by the Water Undertaking. Where water undertakers are not proposing to lay mains of adequate size for fire fighting purposes, the cost of a supply from the nearest main of adequate size would be determined on an individual basis. Before laying a main, confirmation from the fire service would be required that the intended size would fulfil the fire fighting needs identified for the nature of risk presented by the proposed development.
- In planning provision of fire hydrants in countryside areas, particular attention should be given to specific risks and no definitive distances can be provided.
- For developments that are considered to be of significant risk e.g. processing activities involving the use of highly flammable materials, proposals will be considered on their merits to ensure that the overall provision for fire fighting is adequate. This may include internal water based protection systems, private fire hydrants, statutory fire hydrants and other “open water” supplies where appropriate.
- Fire hydrants should be sited in positions to be agreed by the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority and the Local Planning Authority. Such locations will be at main roads, feeder roads or road junctions where they are readily visible.

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3.0 Fire and Rescue Infrastructure Legal Agreement

- 3.1 Applicants or their agents will be required to enter into a legal agreement with the Council to safeguard the provision of adequate fire and rescue infrastructure in a reasonable time to meet the need generated by the development. Provision of fire and rescue services will normally be required prior to the construction works commencing. Construction sites are potentially high fire risk areas and should be supported by adequate water for fire fighting purposes

4.0 Contacts

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