

**North East Scotland Flood Liaison and Advice Group  
Held –Room J, Woodhill House  
2pm, Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2006**

**Meeting Note**

**Present**

Andrew Carruthers (Aberdeenshire Council)	AEC (Chair)
Alison Hogge (Aberdeenshire Council)	AH
Piers Blaxter (Aberdeenshire Council)	PB
Isobel Davidson (Aberdeenshire Council)	ID
Malcolm Taberner (Aberdeenshire Council)	MT
Richard Hoggins (Aberdeen City Council)	RH
Daniel Lewis (Aberdeen City Council)	DL
David MacIntosh (Emergency Planning Unit)	DM

**1. Apologies**

Jim Lister (Scottish Water)  
Linda Mathieson (Aberdeenshire Council)  
Neil Stewart (Cairngorms National Park Authority)  
Nicola Abrams (SEPA)  
Douglas Gray (Aberdeenshire Council)  
Bill Murphy (Aberdeen Council)  
David Crichton (Insurance Representative)

**2. Minutes**

The minutes were deemed correct.

**3. Matters Arising**

Nothing arising.

**4. FLAGGIS Project**

PB gave a run down of the process so far. The system is now live is waiting for feedback from all the partners on the system. There are some problems with 'Reporting' as there is currently an error on the system.

Testing

Little feedback has been received.

MT reported that he was not able to download the photos (PB said that Anne Buchan is looking into it); it is much quicker than the last version; the maps are okay as they are and he would not change them; the datasets are okay for the general user, but it is not specialised adding that he would welcome data

on SEPA's gauging stations, on the location of Scottish Water's infrastructure (eg the pipe network), and SEPA's 2<sup>nd</sup> generation flood risk maps; MT also added that he would welcome data on flooding history from the Insurance Industry (PB said he had tried that, but failed); and information from SNIFFER reports

**Action:** *AH to ask SEPA for a progress update on the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation maps*

Other comments were:

- the passwords are working fine but as there is no data in Aberdeen, it has little value in the City;
- there is no dataset on sub-river catchments (PB said that this data is not yet available);
- it was running slow at times (PB said that this depended on the dataset selected and the scale of the maps - need to monitor the speed of downloads; and
- could inform users of the specification requirements (PB – could place this information in the Users Manual (Version 3))

**Action:** *MT to Identify which datasets run slow*

AEC suggested writing to each organisation informing them that as we (PB) have not received any feedback from them, that we are to assume that they are happy with FLAGGIS and to continue on with the next stage. The letter should also state that we are still waiting for data to be added to FLAGGIS, and ask each organisation what data they can provide, and when (prioritised).

AEC asked what information should be provided as a priority. DL said Flood Maps. This is currently being looked at for the City's Local Plan.

**Action:** *PB to send DL a copy of the memorandum and revise the Users Manual*

With regards to Flood Risk Assessments (FRAs) it was reported that in Aberdeen City, FRAs at Building Warrant level provides more detail compared with FRAs at Planning level. FRAs have been required since 1995, which have mostly been for soakaways.

MT said that in Aberdeenshire, all FRAs come in at the Planning stage, and not when a Building Warrant is applied for.

AEC asked if it would be practical to have one rather than two FRA registers for the City and Shire. MT supported a single register as the rivers cross both local authority boundaries. Need to contact BM. FRA registers are a statutory requirement under the 1997 Flood Prevention (Scotland) Act.

**Action:** *RH to provide a list of FRA for large scale developments*

PB suggested having a single folder with 3 sub-divisions – City, Shire and Building Warrants (City). However, it was highlighted that some data could be commercially confidential, and it was questioned what implications there may be under the Freedom of Information legislation. PB said FLAGGIS is a private website, and open only to a few organisations.

It was asked if FLAGGIS will include other assessments, such as radon gas; as this gas may be affected by rising water tables during floods (an assessment required under Building Regulations 2005). PB said a lot of the area is covered by granite, but he does not know who would have this data.

**Action:** *AH to ask Environmental Health if any research has been done on radon gas.*

#### Data downloaded

Presently, FLAGGIS has a wide range of datasets. Natural heritage data is the most complete. Built heritage and planning data is available in Aberdeenshire, but no datasets from Aberdeen City have been received.

Flood Risk Assessment data is up-to-date. It is a useful tool, but it is not completely functional as we are awaiting data from Aberdeen City.

PB advised the group that we need to discuss what will be done next. This will be dependent on getting information from Aberdeen City. PB would welcome data on planning applications, built and natural heritage designations and on flood events. However, DL reported that he is not aware of any of these being digitised into datasets in the city. It was also reported that planning applications have not been digitised in the City.

PB said he would welcome FRA from the City (scanned).

**Action:** *DL to supply PB with scanned FRA from the City, and the mention the need for digitised datasets to Richard Bush.*

#### Evaluation

PB said that FLAGGIS still needs to be evaluated more, and that the system is there to be used. DL reported that the City has “Flood Events” in GIS.

**Action:** *DL to contact PB with GIS contact*

## **5. Development of Coastal Policy**

MT had hoped to get money from the East Coastal Partnership, but they cannot give grants to local authorities. Therefore, the money will have to come out of their budget.

AEC said that development on coastal flood risk areas would only be permitted under certain circumstances adding that we are duty bound to

identify these areas, as these areas may be adversely affected by flooding in the future.

MT highlighted that the predictions made so far are not 100% accurate, and any changes will take decades (e.g. 40years). As a result it is difficult to know which assumption to take to draw these (coastal flood affected) lines – national guidance is therefore needed.

Also raised were the issues of which contour line to go for and how to identify the implications of each cell. There could be a policy covering land 0-5m and 6-10m above sea level, but this approach may be politically sensitive.

AEC said that we must allow for all predicted forecasts to be mapped out, so we can defend ourselves at Inquiry (have a robust argument). It is intended that these lines will be drawn in 12-15 months time in the next Development Plan. Adopting the precautionary principle was suggested.

It was suggested that a pilot study of different areas (cells), also which have different features could be identified and used to test different assumptions and to identify the implications. This approach was supported.

**Action: Group needs to identify relevant settlements at risk from coastal flooding (BM from the City). Cells should not be too big – suggests villages and coastline**

It was asked whether areas outside settlement boundaries be considered under a Policy? These could be areas of 'public interest', eg. built heritage sites. MT said that a coastline protection policy for flood defence already exists and works, and it is based on social needs, not natural heritage needs.

RH highlighted that a rise in sea level at the sewage treatment works in Nigg will affect the outflow from the sewerage plant and affect its efficiency. As a result, its capacity may decrease. PB replied saying it is about the pipe infrastructure, and not the plant itself. AEC added that we need to start identifying sites at risk from flooding. RH reported that seawater rises in several areas of Aberdeen City Centre.

It was also said seawater could get into water aquifers if the sea level rises. As a result, agricultural land will become adversely affected from increased salt level.

**Action: MT to contact BM to begin a major study, starting with a couple of pilot studies. MR to get quotes.**

RH reported that he has a study on the impact from the offshore wind farm on flood alleviation. DM added that they have to do a risk assessment for their Community Risk Register.

## 6. SUDS Guidance

Good feedback received – thanks to all. JC is currently waiting for the “Sewers for Scotland 2” from Scottish Water to be published before finalising the SUDS guidance.

## 7. Development Plan Update

### a) Structure Plan

PB – Engaged in preparatory research. Hoping to start the first formal preparatory act in December 2006 – when the City’s Local Plan is finished.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) report, Issues Report and Report of Survey will also be prepared in the next few years. PB is hoping for a draft plan by June 2007, and have the plan finalised by December 2007. The team will be engaging in stakeholder consultations from June 2006 onwards.

PB added that there is unlikely to be an environment policy. ID said so long as the structure plan complies with the Habitats Directive it should not be a problem. PB added that the team will be looking at spatial analysis using the SEA process.

### b) Local Plan – Aberdeenshire

AEC – Almost ready to prepare a notice on the Council’s intention to adopt, but this has been delayed as the Habitats Directive requires an “Appropriate Assessment” of Natura 2000 sites (international designations) to be carried out and there are 40 such sites in Aberdeenshire. A formal assessment will be required, for example on the impact of proposed Banchory developments affecting the water quality of the River Dee, which is designated as a Special Area of Conservation.

### c) Local Plan - City

DL – LPI is ongoing. It will start in June and finish in November. The Report is due to come out in mid 2007.

[PB added that we should now be including the River Basin Management Plan. Tamsin Morris will be the North East Officer].

**Action: SEPA to provide updates**

## 8. Major Development Proposals

Trump Development – Two golf courses; 6 storey Victorian hotel (on a hill) and 250 condominium (issue – if they are second homes – planning gain can be requested, if timeshare, planning gain will not be requested) are proposed.

The main flooding issues highlighted were drainage impact on dune stability and sewage connection.

Western Peripheral Route – the new route is further west than before, so Red Moss will not be impacted on, and its drainage characteristics will not be affected. The River Dee crossing will be over the existing bridge.

Third Don Crossing – Planning application submitted in January.

Davidson's Mill – Mixed-use development including 300 dwellings and retail. Flooding issues were highlighted but the traffic issues are the main problem (the Haudagain roundabout cannot take more traffic).

Woodlands – No SUDS scheme submitted in the Building Warrant (although it was in with the Planning Application).

West Row, Peterhead – Retail planning application (was going to be housing, but did not build them as they said the site was prone to flooding!).

Fraserburgh – Trust Hold 40 has been sold by the council – it is a protected site, but a hotel has been proposed. The site is also within a coastal flood risk area.

## **9. AOCB**

RH – Training on prefabricated filtration bed (where there is difficulty getting rid of ground water) from SEPA on 1<sup>st</sup> June, Room 1, St. Nicholas House at 2pm. Invitations out (MT not received an invite, should contact Mike Crowe 522708).

AEC – Banff and Buchan Area Manager reported a concern regarding no one being available when there was a water pollution problem in Peterhead (e.g. SEPA, SW, the council). Sarah Cooks from the City's Environmental Health Department deals with contaminants. It was asked what lessons could be learned? DM said currently the service is manned voluntarily, but there is no out of hour cover available. Need to identify out of hour contacts. RH stated that Sarah Cook has a register of contaminant sites, and this is important where there is a flood, which could spread the contaminated. PB said that Aberdeenshire has a dataset on contaminated sites.

PB to include a contaminated land dataset in FLAGGIS.

**The date of the next meeting will be on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2006 in Room J, Woodhill House at 2pm**