

# **North East Flood Appraisal Group**

## **Note of meeting held 13 March 2002**

Present

Andrew Carruthers (Chairman)  
David Crichton  
Claire Pritchett  
Emma Parkes  
Hilary MacBean  
Piers Blaxter  
David Cameron  
Malcolm Taberner  
Jim Lister  
Mike Neville

### **1. Apologies.**

Apologies were received from. Bill Murphy

### **2. Minute of previous meeting**

Minor amendments were made to the minute of the last meeting

### **3. Matters Arising**

None

### **4. Floods Database.**

Andrew Carruthers reported no progress on this issue due to lack of time but intimated that responsibility for managing this project had been delegated to Piers Blaxter who will be taking the project forward. It was with regret that it was noted that it had not been possible to take the feasibility study forward this financial year but possible spends this financial year were identified, principally on GIS related software. NOSWA still remain to be asked formally about the use of their data within the flood database and it was agreed that PB should write to Jim Lister with a view to obtaining a formal response and confirmation that the NOSWA data will be made available

### **5. Drainage Impact Analysis guidance note and Suds Working Group.**

Hilary MacBean reported that the guidance note had now been posted on the SEPA web site and that publishing of the document would be undertaken imminently. Development Control staff were being made aware of its contents and the document was to be aired at future Agents Meetings in due course to aid dissemination. Mike Nevill intimated that a similar process was occurring in Aberdeen City with the guidance note being incorporated into their digest of Development Control information. It is, as yet, too early to gauge its reception out with the partner bodies who drafted it.

In relation to the dissemination of the guidance it was asked whether it should be included as an appendix to the Aberdeenshire local plan. It was agreed that it requires to be referred to in the plan but that it would be inappropriate to include it as an appendix. In the city the document is being given the status of supplementary planning guidance and is to be circulated to agents as part of the planning information pack.

It was agreed that the note should be promoted within Scotland as best practice and an article should be prepared for “the Scottish Planner” to this end by PB.

Ongoing maintenance of SUDS was still an issue although there was movement in both NPPG 3 and as a result of deliberations on the proposed Water bill. The publication of this bill in June may clarify this issue and raise the need for a supplement to the guidance to reflect the proposed legislation. Clear guidance has been requested and it is thought that this will take the form of secondary legislation. Until there is clarification Local authorities were resisting the burden of maintenance.

The development industry seem to be taking the guidance on board, recognising that there are costs savings in such development.

## **6. Grey Water**

The issue of changes to the building regulations regarding grey water was highlighted. Recent changes in the building regulations allow grey water to be disposed to soak-aways and allows NOSWA the discretion of whether to accept Gray water into the public sewer. The need for additional soak-aways has land take implications but the discretion of NOSWA will determine whether this becomes an issue in the future.

## **7. Flood Prevention Report**

Malcolm Taberner gave a verbal report on the biannual Flood Prevention Report, noting that it had been prepared and was to be posted on the Council web site shortly. It was noted that over time this will produce volume of high quality data on flooding which should not be lost to the proposed Flooding database. A means of incorporating this information will have to be found. No information pamphlet has been published as yet.

Matters arising from the FPR were that there is a need to provide the Royal British Geological Society with the information for their database and a need to receive OS grid references of flood events to allow them to be geo-coded.

The FAG congratulated Malcolm on pulling together and publishing the report.

## **7. Water Framework Directive**

Emma Parkes presented a synopsis of the issues which the Consultation document for the forthcoming Water (Scotland) Bill for discussion with the FAG. It was noted that this represented Aberdeenshire Council’s assessment. Aberdeen City Council had already made a response independent of the FAG. Issues raised included:

- The possible lack of clarity caused by much of the detail being proposed in, currently undrafted, secondary legislation.

- The ability of SEPA to collate and analyse economic and social as well as environmental factors in river basin management issues. Does it have the width of experience and resourcing to cope with this? The role of other organisations need to be considered.
- There may be conflicts between River Basin Management Plans and statutory land use plans in terms of which plan has primacy. Catchment Management plans will not regulate land use but will lead to greater weight in SEPA consultations on the Development Plan. There is a need for a synergy between the two plans and clarification on this relationship will be required.
- There will be no right of appeal against Catchment Management Plans. This gives them greater importance than the development plan.
- Artificial wetlands (SUDS) are not part of the Bill as these are seen to be “designed to be polluted”. No objectives are given for wetland management.
- The Bill requires robust characterisation and monitoring . Again the enormity of the task and the ability of SEPA to cope must be questioned.
- No new regulatory framework is proposed for the delivery of environmental objectives. Promotion of existing voluntary schemes is favoured. Will existing environment schemes provide sufficient funding to enable proactive management? Are Catchment Management Plans going to be specific enough, or frequent enough, to respond to specific issues? There is no provision in the Bill for additional money for existing schemes.
- There are no proposals to control other land use aspects which have considerable impacts on water quality. The voluntary approach is promoted.
- The proposed bill is very narrow in its approach and minimalist, only considering river and river quality issues which can be controlled by consents.
- There are problems with the integration of Coastline management Plans and Catchment management plans
- There are problems with the Bills definition of an “impoundment” to include Flood storage areas.
- There is no consideration of the social and economic impacts of flooding.

The relationship between the development plan and the Catchment management plan and how discharge consents should be considered within Development Control were seen as significant issues by the FAG.

Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils are to exchange responses, for information, and the WWF response was identified as being worthy of attention.

NESFAG fully endorsed the issues and concerns identified by Aberdeenshire Council.

## **8. Development Plan Update**

Progress reports were given on the two authorities’ Development Plans.

The Challenge to the structure plan did not involve flooding issues and it was thought highly unlikely that the SHBA appeal would impact on drainage issues. NEST remains the statutory Structure Plan.

Aberdeen City Local Plan was to be considered by Members with a view to putting the draft "on deposit" at a meeting to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2002. Publication would take place in late September with a 6 weeks period for objections.

Aberdeenshire Local Plan follows a similar pattern with the components of the plan being considered by area committees with a view to approval of the finalised plan on 9<sup>th</sup> May with publication thereafter on a timetable similar to Aberdeen City's.

## **8. Development Proposals**

A number of potential development sites were considered:

Meadows, Huntly; An increase in the height of the embankment by 250 to 300 mm has been forthcoming after consideration of a 200year flood risk assessment. The process followed has led to an upgrade of the defences to an adequate standard and demonstrates that the process works well..

Forestry Cluster at Inverurie: Consideration of the proposed site of the Forestry Cluster at Uryside brought universal condemnation as being a site liable to flood. Concern was expressed about the impact of logs being washed downstream in the event of flood.

Uryside, Inverurie: The Flood risk assessment commissioned by the Council has led to a revised development proposal and shows the value of conducting a proper assessment, by the Council if needs be.

## **9. Review of Progress of NESFAG**

The chairman briefly reviewed the work of the NESFAG and came to the conclusions that, while there were failures in some areas (namely mitigation and emergency planning) generally there was good progress. A key target for the forthcoming year will be progress on the flooding database.

In relation to Emergency planning it was agreed to invite David Macintosh to the next NESFAG meeting to discuss emergency planning issues and to send him the objectives and minutes of the meetings to determine whether he would wish to regularly attend.

Links with other FAGs was also promoted as a good thing and it was agreed to contact East Coast Fags to see whether there was any interest in a "FAG chairs liaison meeting.

## **9. AOCB**

It was noted that David Crichton was now no longer funded by the ABI and while he was searching for alternative sponsors he would still like to continue attendance at NESFAG. David's contribution to the NESFAG was noted and he was asked to continue his association with the group. Sponsorship of his attendance by NESFAG members could be considered and David Crichton was to provide an indication of the costs and other sources of funding which would allow him to continue his association with NESFAG.

It was noted that the SEPA 1985 flood maps prepared for the NE by Babbie Group could be made available to Aberdeenshire Council from SEPA

## **10. Date of next meeting**

The date for the next meeting was set at Wednesday 2nd May 2002 at 2.00pm in Woodhill House.

### **ACTION LIST**

#### **Andrew Carruthers**

Invite David Macintosh to the next NESFAG meeting. Supply him with minutes and objectives .

Ascertain interest from other FAG chairs as to an East Coast liaison meeting

#### **Piers Blaxter**

Write to Jim Lister requesting access to NOSWA drainage digital data-set

Prepare article for Scottish Planner on Drainage Impact assessment Guidance Note

#### **Malcom Tabener**

Supply RBGS with information from the Flood prevention report for their database

#### **David Crichton**

Provide information on costs and sources of funding to enable his continued association with NESFAG

#### **David Cameron**

Provide Aberdeenshire Council with the Babtie 1985 Flood map database