

**North East Scotland Flood Liaison and Advice Group  
Held –Room G, Woodhill House  
2pm, Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2005**

**Meeting Note**

**Present**

Andrew Carruthers (Aberdeenshire Council)  
Alison Hogge (Aberdeenshire Council)  
Malcolm Taberner (Aberdeenshire Council)  
Emma Williams (Aberdeenshire Council)  
Piers Blaxter (Aberdeenshire Council)  
Jim Lister (Scottish Water)  
Daniel Lewis (Aberdeen City)  
Tom Nesbit (speaker, Forest Research)

**1. Apologies**

David MacIntosh (Emergency Planning Unit)  
Bill Murphy (Aberdeen Council)  
Hilary MacBean (Aberdeenshire Council)  
David Crichton (Insurance Industry Representative)  
David Cameron (SEPA)  
Nicola Abrams (SEPA)  
Neil Stewart (Cairngorms National Park Authority)

**2. Minutes**

Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed, and they will be made available on the NESFLAG website at (<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/web/flooding>).

***Action Alison Hogge***

**3. Matters Arising**

Bog Bursts – Malcolm Taberner will report back later.

***Action Malcolm Taberner***

5m soakaways – Hilary MacBean has not yet been able to contact Jim Lister (Scottish Water) to discuss the matter. It was again raised that continuity between both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils interpretation on the soakaway rule is needed quickly.

***Action Hilary MacBean (and Jim Lister)***

PAN 69 – Daniel Lewis agreed to contact the Building Control Team Leader of Aberdeen City Council to ask for one of their team to attend NESFLAG, to keep a better balance between officers from the City and the Shire. David MacIntosh from the Emergency Planning Unit has agreed to be part of the group, although he could not make this meeting.

***Action Daniel Lewis***

**4. Hydrological impacts in forests, Tom Nesbit, Forest Research**

Tom Nesbit from Forest Research, a branch from the Forestry Commission gave an informative presentation on the latest edition of their Forest and Water Guidelines, and on the use of forests to control water flow in times of flood and sediment deposit. Tom concentrated on the latter, informing the group on the use of floodplain woodland as an effective 'soft' engineering tool for aiding flood control. Tom reported that the presence of trees, undergrowth and woody debris on the floodplain can increase the hydraulic 'roughness' of the floodplain, thus slowing down the passage of flood flows, and directing flows into channels and backwater pools.

Tom noted that the majority of the UK's floodplain woodland has long disappeared, and research currently being carried out in England has shown that there is considerable scope for using strategically placed floodplain woodland to alleviate downstream flooding. The woodland can delay the flood peak travel time downstream, although it can back the water upstream over several hundred metres.

Tom reported that further work is currently underway to check the hydraulic roughness of various types of floodplain woodland and to investigate how this could be enhanced by woodland design and management.

**5. PAN 69**

Hilary MacBean had forwarded to the Flood Prevention Team (FPT) her interpretation of PAN 69 as a best practice note for the Development Control Teams. The FPT had raised some issues with this interpretation, which were forwarded to Andrew for his consideration. Hilary's note was going to be raised at the meeting, but due to her absence, it was agreed to postpone it to the next meeting. Both notes will be circulated to the group and the FPT prior to the next meeting for consideration.

***Action Alison Hogge***

**6. Coastal issues**

This issue is still on the agenda to consider the implications of climate change (as raised in the Foresight Report), and the apparent retreat of insurance companies from insuring properties less than 5m above sea level (measured at ordnance datum). One insurance company has apparently raised the

minimum to “the 7.5 metre contour” (David Crichton (2004) *Planning and Flooding*, SPEL pp129-133).

Malcolm Taberner informed members of another group called the East Grampian Coastal Forum, which he hopes will help to develop a Coastal Management Plan for Aberdeenshire in the next few years. The Forum also looks at ecological and recreation issues, and aims to identify what infrastructure needs to be protected, as well as identify areas at risk from the rise in sea level.

On the assumption that predicted rises in sea level within the next generation will affect development decisions being taken now, Andrew stated that it is important that consideration should be given in the near future, and he would welcome views from other members from the group. In the meantime, he volunteered to encapsulate a set of questions that would need to be addressed, and to circulate them for consideration.

### ***Action All of the group***

## **7. FLAGGIS project, stage 2**

Piers Blaxter circulated to the group the latest draft of the Memorandum of Agreement to all perspective partners. Piers reported that most partners have now responded, and a number of changes were suggested. These related to:

- clarifying certain partners' roles and responsibilities;
- delete the words “the council”, and including the names of all local authority partners;
- clarifying that copyright remains with the provider of the data, and not Aberdeenshire Council;
- clarifying that data is not available for sale;
- resolution of dispute – discussions should be held with the Chief Executive of the relevant organisation before any arbitration action; and
- the termination clause – it was requested that partners should be allowed to give a month notice, even though partners have to pay an annual maintenance fee.

Piers reported that any withdrawal of information would require the Memorandum of Agreement to be amended. Piers also highlighted the urgency to get the Memorandum of Agreement signed up by all partners as soon as possible, so that action can progress.

Consensus was to proceed on the basis of the draft memorandum to avoid loss of opportunity.

### ***Action Piers Blaxter***

## **8. SUDS Working Group**

The Environment Team in Aberdeenshire Council has prepared draft good practice guidance on soft SUDS. Their next meeting will be on 24<sup>th</sup> February

2005. A Scottish Water contact was provided to Andrew, to assist in the development of the document.

### **9. Development Plan Update**

Aberdeen City Council are aiming for their Local Plan Inquiry in November this year (2005). They will be reporting to committee the proposed strategy, land allocations and timetable in March.

Aberdeenshire Council's Local Plan Inquiry finished this month (February 2005), and the reporters comments are expected within 6 months.

### **10. Major Developments**

Malcolm reported on the need for better communication between the Flood Prevention Team (FPT) and Development Control when they request further information on planning applications. This request followed from a case in which planning permission was granted prior to more detailed information on drainage being received.

#### ***Action Andrew Carruthers***

In the City, it was reported that the council propose to submit their planning application for the proposed coastal protection works along the Aberdeen Beach front. They will be seeking consent for the rock armour, groynes, and sea wall. It was reported that an Environmental Impact Assessment will not be required due to its scale, but an Environmental Statement will be prepared.

### **11. AOCB**

It was suggested that there should be a link from the 3Dee Vision website to the NESFLAG webpage. This was agreed.

The issue of the extent of Scottish Water's liability during periods of flood, and their responsibility to contribute in full or part to flood alleviation works was discussed. Under the 1968 Sewage Act, Scottish Water's remit only covers roof and road water and sewage. It was reported that Scottish Water have no responsibility for floods, unless caused by one of their own pipes. If it is one of their pipes that has resulted in localised flooding they can payout a small sum of money and provide temporary accommodation. In a particular case brought to the attention of the group, the problem arose from a burn that had been culverted by a builder and was not itself part of Scottish Water's system.

### **12. Topics for the next meeting**

- 5m soakaway boundary issue

**The date of the next meeting was agreed for Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May, at 2pm in Woodhill House, Room G.**