

**North East Flood Appraisal Group  
19 March 2003**

**Meeting Note**

**Present**

Andrew Carruthers, Chair (Aberdeenshire Council)  
Piers Blaxter (Aberdeenshire Council)  
Emma Parkes (Aberdeenshire Council)  
Joanne Lambert (SEPA)  
Jim Lister (Scottish Water)  
Euan Stevenson (Aberdeenshire Council)  
Chris Lilley (Cliff Technologies)  
Malcolm Taberner (Aberdeenshire Council)  
David Cameron (SEPA)

**1) Apologies**

Claire Pritchett (SEPA)  
Andy Brownrigg (Aberdeen City Development)  
David Crichton

**2) Minute of Previous Meeting**

The minute of the previous meeting was agreed as being accurate.

**3) Matters Arising**

Andrew Carruthers raised the issue of confidence in the calculation of flood risk and David Cameron was asked for his views. He advised that calculation was theoretically possible and that there were statistical methods available for doing so. The software currently used for estimation of large flood events was not designed to identify confidence. He was further pressed on what was needed to achieve this, whether it was worth doing and how it could be done. He advised it was worth doing but he was unclear as to how to do it. He suggested that it would be possible to ask for a range of flood returns to be provided in a flood impact assessment and these could then be used to assess sensitivity. David Cameron agreed to give more thought as to how this might be done.

***ACTION: David Cameron***

Piers Blaxter identified that there were in fact two issues previously discussed. One was the statistical confidence previously considered and the other was the competence of contractors.

It was noted that Aberdeenshire Council was required to compile a register of flood impact assessments undertaken through policy in the Local Plan.

***ACTION: Aberdeenshire Council***

David Cameron identified that SEPA was already collating a list of flood impact assessments. It was noted that Aberdeenshire Council were now flying over flood events for photos and consequently it may be possible for Aberdeenshire to compare the flood impact assessment and photographs of historical flooding and come to a conclusion. From this it may be possible to draw up a list of competent contractors.

The question was asked about qualification and in response it was identified that SEPA and the flood prevention unit of Aberdeenshire Council audit assessments and provide advice on best practice. It was noted that this initial problem arose in relation to a site where flooding had come from an unforeseen area and that this is difficult to assess and identify before the event. In this respect it was recognised that there was a need for contractors to take off their blinkers and look at issues outwith the site. In terms of qualification, the only qualification that was valid was felt to be experience.

It was also identified that flood impact assessments should calibrate and verify their hydraulic models through comparison of known events with the predictions in the flood impact assessment. It was noted that there may be an issue relating to commercial confidentiality of flood impact assessments and thus there was a need to ask permission whether the data could be used in these ways.

The second matter arising from the minute related to the implementation of SUDS and it was agreed that there was a need to call a previous working party together to consider the approach adopted by Aberdeen City and see whether it could be applied to Aberdeenshire as well.

***ACTION: Previous working party***

**4) “Drainage Impact Assessment Guidance for Developers and Regulators” RTPI / SE Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning 2002**

The Flood Appraisal Group noted the award to Aberdeenshire Council and partners of a commendation in the category of “Outstanding Quality and Performance in Development Control” for the “Drainage Impact Assessment Guidance for Developers and Regulators”, which the Flood Appraisal Group had commissioned.

**5) Presentation by Chris Lilley, Cliff Technologies, on the FAGGIS project, Phase 1**

Chris Lilley gave a description of the project to date. He identified that there was considerable variation in both the quantity of input and of output that would be derived from different partners in the project. Some will get lots out, some will be putting lots of data in, according to their organisation. He noted that two reports had been written, both of which were to act as an input into the feasibility report which he was authoring at the present time. He identified that the majority of the datasets which were desired were available, including background mapping and aerial photography. In terms of insurance data he identified that it was unlikely that we would be able to get hold of it. He also identified that there was large scale modelling being undertaken in England and Wales but that may not be rolled

out in Scotland. The other big dataset which was requested was the predicted flood coverage dataset. This does not yet exist but could be derived. Data is being collected and monitored on an adhoc basis and consequently will build up over time. This will form a very important dataset.

In terms of requirements he identified that the benefits to the partners were seen as being the creation of a centralised data source, the "one-stop-shop". He identified that some of the requirements that were sought were not applicable or appropriate but in general the creation of a library of information with limited online analysis could be provided.

In terms of the technology he identified that it would have to have a GIS system at the core. There were lots of possibilities and lots of variability in what could be done. He identified that it may be possible to do a low cost introductory system and gave the opinion that, what ever was being done, it would not take hundreds of thousands of pounds but tens of thousands of pounds.

David Cameron noted that the Scottish Executive were to make funding available for indicative flood risk maps over the next three years and that SEPA were likely to be involved in the production of these. Usage of these would probably be by SEPA, Scottish Water and the Local Authorities. There was some cynicism from the group as to how the Scottish Executive were proposing to deliver this and where the data was coming from. It was suggested that the modelling would probably be based on catchment characteristics and for riverine flooding would be relatively easy. There are some questions regarding the accuracy of the methodology. It was concluded that it would be worth incorporating these datasets if at all possible and there is a need for the group to keep an eye on this particular issue.

Chris Lilley confirmed that the issue of capture of new data was outwith the scope of the existing project.

There was some discussion about the merits of having an integrated system and the merits of rolling out such a system to a wider area but it was confirmed, by Chris, that everyone involved was still enthusiastic about the project.

The next steps would involve the circulation of the feasibility report and the need to reconvene a small group to consider the way forward in the short term.

***ACTION: Andrew Carruthers, Piers Blaxter, Malcolm Taberner and City representative***

A number of things needed to be given thought over the next few months so that we can progress the project, particularly the financial programming of the project and identification of what the development costs might be. Again the issue of copyright and confidentiality of datasets was flagged.

The issue of data management was raised with the analogy made of a library needing a librarian. The question of who was to look after the datasets was considered and whether these maintenance costs had been previously identified. Chris Lilley confirmed that the hardware, the software and the datasets themselves

would need continuous maintenance but that it was hard to quantify what those costs would be as we don't know what the system architecture is. It was agreed that there would need to be a co-ordinator of some sort for the data, even if this was held in the simplest form. No matter what the role of the administrator was, an administrator would be required. Again it was agreed that there was a need to consider this issue as a matter of urgency and that a paper exercise to establish protocols would probably be worthwhile.

The question of whether we should be running a prototype system was considered but Chris Lilley identified that this tests the technology and not the process and administration and perhaps wasn't worthwhile.

## **6) Conclusions from the NESFAG "Flooding Issues in the North East" Seminar held on 16 January 2003**

Piers Blaxter gave a brief synopsis of the response to the event. It was identified that this was the first ever meeting of its type in Scotland.

One of the issues which was raised was the disquiet from the natural heritage interests that natural heritage issues had not been given due consideration at the meeting. This is in relation to flood management and its relationship to natural heritage. It was agreed that natural heritage issues were inextricably linked to flooding issues and that there was perhaps a need for a closer link between these two issues in the work of the flood appraisal group.

In terms of regularity of seminar-type meetings it was suggested that a programme of topics, including natural heritage issues, should be drawn up for consideration over a period of years. The form of these seminars would be that of a general summary of the work of the FAG over the past year and then a specific focus on a particular theme or topic.

The question of who the audience for these meetings would be was considered and the distinction was drawn between meetings of interests, such as the water industry and the development industry, and the consultative role such meetings should have. It was suggested that one of the themes which could be considered should be involving communities and that that would probably have to be an evening meeting.

In terms of frequency it was considered that a 6 month periodicity was too short and that one meeting per year would probably be appropriate except where there was a pressing need for an issue to be publicly aired. Andrew Carruthers committed to draw up a list of topics for addressing.

### ***ACTION: Andrew Carruthers***

The seminar also identified the expectation of many of the attendees for a NESFAG website and it was suggested that this should be explored with Aberdeen City as to who should undertake the development of this website and where such a site should be located. In terms of content of the website there was general agreement that some information on who does what in flooding, what is FAG, some form of discussion forum, some form of frequently asked questions

and the sanitised FAG minutes would all be useful contributions to the website. Andrew Carruthers, Piers Blaxter and Malcolm Taberner are to get together and consider this issue for the next meeting.

***ACTION: Andrew Carruthers, Piers Blaxter and Malcolm Taberner***

In terms of feedback to interested parties it was agreed that the most effective way to do this would be to create a mailing list but that there would be a need for the minutes to be checked, agreed and sanitised quickly after each meeting to allow them then to be emailed out in good time and there was a commitment to do this.

## **7) Development Plan Update**

Andrew Carruthers and Piers Blaxter gave a brief explanation of the approach proposed for the review of housing land in Aberdeenshire in the near future. In terms of the Aberdeenshire Local Plan it was identified that there had been a number of objections on flooding related issues. The Local Plan team were addressing these and negotiation was taking place. The issue of drainage capacities of settlements was also raised and it was identified that Aberdeenshire Council were still awaiting information.

No information could be given on the Aberdeen City Local Plan apart from the fact that it had been abandoned and a new plan was being proposed.

## **8) Major Development Proposals**

Two development proposals were highlighted to the group.

The first was the development by Stewart Milne which is being proposed for the Kepplestone Campus, off Anderson Drive.

The second was the proposed development of flats at Keithhall Road, Inverurie which SEPA had identified was in an area which is flooding and as such had recommended that this be taken into account in the decision. Piers Blaxter committed to ensuring that these concerns were given due weight by the development control team considering the issue.

***ACTION: Piers Blaxter***

## **9) Any Other Competent Business**

The “Learning to Live with Rivers” conference which was being sponsored by Aberdeenshire Council Transportation and Infrastructure was highlighted and it was identified that this was a good opportunity for networking and making contacts with those interested in flooding issues.

Andrew Carruthers highlighted the COSLA Flooding Task Group final report of which Malcolm Taberner was a co-author. This report looks at issues and improvements which could be undertaken relating to flooding and has now been adopted as COSLA policy.

David Cameron identified that the aerial photographs from the November extreme flooding events had now been digitised and flood extent maps for the Don, the Ury, part of the Deveron and the Dee from Aboyne to Aberdeenshire were now available.

**10) Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was provisionally set for 18 June 2003, at Woodhill House.