

**North East Scotland Flood Appraisal Group
23 January 2004 at 2pm**

Meeting Note

Present

Andrew Carruthers, Chair (Aberdeenshire Council)
Alison Hogge (Aberdeenshire Council)
Jennifer Davidson (Aberdeenshire Council)
Jim Lister (Scottish Water)
David Crichton (Insurance Industry Representative)
Malcolm Taberner (Aberdeenshire Council)
David Cameron (SEPA)
Nicola Abrams (SEPA)
Euan Stevenson (Aberdeenshire Council)
Hilary MacBean (Aberdeenshire Council)
Bill Murphy (Aberdeen – Property and Technical)

1) Apologies

Piers Blaxter (Aberdeenshire Council)
Drew Balfour (Aberdeen – City Development)

2) Minute of Previous Meeting

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

3) Matters Arising

English Heritages' work on the restoration of flood damaged historic buildings, which David Crichton contributed to, will be published in a magazine on 29 January 2004, and will be available on the Internet. Derick Murray from Aberdeen City Council will be invited to attend the next NESFAG meeting to discuss the current state of play regarding the Western Peripheral Route. The flood risk assessments will be going ahead as a joint study between Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council.

Hilary MacBean has spoken to Gary Black from Building Control and she reported back saying that the Aberdeenshire Council interpretation is that surface water discharge in a soakaway can be delivered within five metres of the boundary of a property, but not within five metres of a house. However, there is an issue that many houses now have garages in front of them, which effectively reduces the distance between the house and the boundary. Therefore soakaways may not be possible in these styles of houses.

Although this is a building control matter, there is a planning interest, and it was suggested that Hilary and Jim have a meeting, along with the building control team leaders (Gary Black and Aberdeen City's equivalent).

ACTION: Jim Lister and Hilary MacBean

4) **Role of Fire Brigade**

Alistair Spence gave a presentation on the role of the fire brigade titled: Prevention and Intervention Role of Grampian Fire and Rescue Service. Alistair stated that flooding comes under 'environmental damage' as one of the five life risks, that they will provide an initial response to domestic and commercial property affected by flooding. However, they have no statutory right to go into a house in times of flood. He also stated that the fire service is aiming to work in partnership with other organisations and to create a common policy.

There are 40 stations in the Grampian region (Moray, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City), and even in times of flood there must be fire cover throughout the region. Twenty five percent of all 240 full-time fire fighters are on call at any one time, although only Peterhead, Aberdeen and Elgin have full-time fire fighters. Elsewhere there are 300 part-time fire fighters, although this figure is decreasing due to the fact that a part-time fire fighter would have to leave their work to attend an emergency.

Alistair also said that fire fighters are being trained to deal with flood events, and are also receiving training in emergency planning and terrorism. Eleven percent of all call outs are special circumstances, such as car accidents and flooding. However, 39% of all call outs are false alarms.

5) **FAGGIS project, presented by Chris Lilley of Cliff Technologies**

The project was put out to tender late last year (2003) and awarded to CLIFF Technology, who will be developing a pilot system funded solely by Aberdeenshire Council in the meantime. The expectation is to roll it out to other partners in the next financial year, and Bill Murphy in particular expressed the City's interest in contributing at that stage. The initial purpose of the project is to bring together at least 7 different datasets including general mapping of watercourses, drainage, land use, photographs, live weather feeds, and reports either pre-detailed or adhoc. The delivery of the pilot will be web-based using both the internet and intranet. The GIS system will use a Small World database, and will incorporate a plotting tool system, search facility, and a browser tool to allow the user to build a list of requirements. However, it will not be possible to use address points on the Internet. It is hoped that the first demonstration project will be completed at the end of February 2004. There will be no capacity limit when it is launched on the web.

6) **FAG website**

All members have received a copy of the website and were asked to provide their views on any changes that need to be made. Those present at the meeting agreed that in general it looked good. Changes agreed were to add an insert on the "Who does what?" page, highlighting Emergency roles, and that there should be a link to Ciria Advice, as well as to Gillian Holland's website for flood victims. After discussion of the order in which the authorities should be listed, it was agreed to leave the Councils at the top.

ACTION: PIERS BLAXTER, ALISON HOGGE and DAVID CRICHTON

7) **Comments on Biennial Reports**

The latest Aberdeenshire report published in November 2003 is available on the website. Malcolm Taberner reported that it has been refined down in comparison with the previous report as it will be available to the public, and it has been made as general as possible by including only street names and not house numbers. However, it was reported that Aberdeen City's report gives more detail than previously due to the fact that information was missing in the previous report.

8) **Register of flood risk assessments**

The Register is now up and running and various people have been asked to provide a copy of their flood risk assessments, although none have yet been received. Therefore, Alison Hogge will be going round Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Council's Planning Departments to obtain existing and previous flood risk assessments. She will be working with Jane Whytock-Celeste to obtain copies of previous flood risk assessments. It was highlighted that the flood prevention team in Stonehaven will have received the best flood risk assessments.

ACTION: ALISON HOGGE

9) **Peat Slides and Bog Bursts**

Jennifer Davidson presented the group with a map drawn up by North East Scotland Biological Records Centre (NESBReC), which showed existing peat and bog locations. However, Jennifer reported that the data on the location of bogs is old as it dates from the 1980's, and may not be reliable. Jennifer also said that in order for peat slides or bog bursts to occur the bed rock would need to be impenetrable and an iron pan layer must exist. She stated that this information is not easy to obtain although the Macaulay Land Institute would have data on soils and rock types. It was reported that SNH believe Aberdeenshire is not at risk from any peat slides as the area receives less rainfall. However, on the basis that patterns of rainfall appear to be changing, it was agreed that Malcolm Taberner could do a quick analysis using Jennifer's maps to identify areas where any peat slide that actually happened would have a significant effect, eg on a settlement, road or waterway. It would then be possible to concentrate more detailed investigation on these areas and if necessary involve the Macaulay Institute to do further work.

ACTION: MALCOM TABERNER

10) **Coastal Issues**

Andrew Carruthers referred back to an incidental statement at the previous meeting that in 50 years time the top of the highest sea surge would be 5 metres above ordnance datum at sea level, and questioned what we should be doing to prepare for this. David Cameron said that the 1 in 200 year flood rule should be used, and SEPA would be providing maps of this within about 18 months. It was suggested that the 5 metre figure could be used as a trigger for flood risk

assessment. Malcolm Taberner added that we would have to add the wave height on top of the 5-metre surge height. Andrew Carruthers agreed that this was good advice and should be used in planning.

It was reported that the sea wall in Aberdeen is at risk from collapse as sand from the beach is being washed away, and the sea wall is now dangerously exposed in places, especially near the harbour.

ACTION: Alison Hogge

11) Future NEFAG “ Flooding issues in the NE” Seminar

A draft timetable of the Seminar was shown. [NB since the meeting, the seminar has been postponed with no new date set yet]. Speakers confirmed for the seminar are Chris Lilley who is working on FAGGIS and Gillian Holland, a flood victim. The audience has yet to be decided but it was suggested that David Crichton, representatives of the City Council, the fire brigade and MSPs, especially Nora Radcliffe, could be invited in the first instance.

ACTION: Alison Hogge

12) Development Plan Update

The Aberdeenshire Local Plan Inquiry has been delayed due to technical reasons – an alternative interpretation of the regulations for policy modifications. As a result the inquiry has been delayed for 5 or 6 months time. This does not affect the validity of the Aberdeenshire Local Plan in the meantime.

13) Major Development Proposals

No major developments were highlighted. However, Hilary MacBean noted that a developer had withdrawn his planning application for a small residential development on grounds of new SPP guidance on who is responsible for any loss of life during a flood. Developers are now required to assess their own liability, and as the proposal was in a flood plain, the developer viewed the risk as too great and withdrew his planning application.

It was highlighted that this may set a precedent for house developers not to submit planning applications in a flood plain.

14) AOCB

The (English) Environment Agency has published ‘Target 12’ which shows where developments are going ahead against their advice, or where no flood risk assessment has been completed when requested. This data is available on their website.

15) Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was set for 7 May 2004, at Woodhill House at 2pm in Committee Room 2.