

**North East Scotland Flood Liaison and Advice Group
Held –Room J, Woodhill House
2pm, Wednesday 25th January 2006**

Meeting Note

Present

Piers Blaxter (Aberdeenshire Council) (Acting chair)
Alison Hogge (Aberdeenshire Council)
Malcolm Taberner (Aberdeenshire Council)
Bill Murphy (Aberdeen Council)
R Hoggins (Aberdeen City Council)
I Davidson (Aberdeenshire Council)
David Crichton (Insurance Representative)
Amy Tavendale (PhD Student from University of Dundee)
Andrew Carruthers (Aberdeenshire Council) [Arrived later]

1. Apologies

David MacIntosh (Emergency Planning Unit)
Linda Mathieson (Aberdeenshire Council)
Jim Lister (Scottish Water)
Neil Stewart (Cairngorms National Park Authority)
Daniel Lewis (Aberdeen City)
Nicola Abrams (SEPA)
Douglas Gray (Aberdeenshire Council)

2. Minutes

In Section 3 change “Restricted” to “Restrictive”.

3. Matters Arising

A - Building Regulations

RH circulated to the group extracts from the Building (Scotland) Act 2003 and Technical Standards 2005 relating to soakaways. RH highlighted that only the yellow pages in the Standards are ‘set in stone’. The remainder is only guidance, and any developments will be assessed against the standards on their merits.

Under section 3.6.5, ‘Maintenance responsibility’, owners of the dwelling will be responsible for communal SUDS, including soakaways.

There is an issue that the Act does not look long term, and SEPA is concerned that poorly designed soakaways, will pollute water courses, especially during summer and winter rain peak times. Furthermore, it was raised that once the Building Certificate runs out, it becomes a pollution problem, and the Environmental Health Service then become involved.

B - Draft SUDS SPG

Judith Cox has circulated the final draft of the SPG for comment. It was raised that local authorities may be liable if watercourses become polluted (e.g. discharging pollution into watercourses). This issue may be in Scottish Water's Sewer for Scotland manual.

4. Approaches to flood management practice (Amy Tavendale, PhD)

Amy presented her findings to the group on the approaches adopted for flood management schemes between 1994 and 2004. She previously gave a presentation to the group 3 years ago, outlining her research project.

AT reported that there had been a drive for new flood management schemes due to a need for change, new national policies, and the rising issue of sustainability.

AT's research covered both Scotland and northern England (between the midlands and the Scottish Borders). AT outlined the objectives of the project:

1. to create a database of all fluvial flood management schemes between 1994 – 2003.
2. to characterise flood management practice (e.g. spatial, temporal and operating authority);
3. to verify if there has been a shift towards more comprehensive 'sustainable' solutions, in practice; and
4. to investigate the extent to which physical catchment characteristics determine the approach to managing the flood hazard.

Her research was based on DEFRA and SE results. Only 26 schemes have been promoted in Scotland, all by Local Authorities, compared with 569 in England (only 91 schemes developed by Local Authorities). Approaches to flood management schemes included building new and modifying existing defences, using structures to protect flood plains, constructing new as well as refurbishing existing pumping stations, additional channelling (such as diversions and by-pass channels/culverts) and other innovative solutions.

The sustainability of these schemes, their effectiveness or the impact on environmental designations was not researched, as this would require further research over a longer period.

AT reported that in Scotland, the majority of the flood management schemes were predominantly for new defences. In England, the drainage boards focused on pumping stations, while the majority of the English local authorities constructed culverts, and the Environment Agency built more flood plain embankments.

Overall, there has been a fall in river channel structures and drainage modifications, but a rise in non-structural and innovative approaches. AT's PhD will be available at the University of Dundee. Any questions can be directed to Amy at a.c.w.tavendale@dundee.ac.uk.

5. FLAGGIS project stage 2

Prior to the meeting, members had been circulated a list of questions relating to content and ease of use of FLAGGIS, and PB invited comments from those present at the meeting. The main comments received were lack of access to the server, but it will be good for historical data.

It was highlighted that there will be a need for a thorough evaluation of FLAGGIS before it is upgraded. PB ran through the system with group. SEPA's 2nd generation maps will be uploaded onto the system to improve its use. The group's view was that the main beneficiaries of FLAGGIS would be planners (e.g. to monitor planning applications). PB noted that the datasets will include address points, planning applications, the River Dee and River Don floods, environment design, and include documents/publications such as Drainage Impact Assessments (DIA). A library of Flood Risk Assessments will also be available.

Flood reports and flood photos currently have very little data on the system. Photos are currently named by grid ref, and if provided, they can be uploaded into the GIS and include the year it was taken. The direction of the photograph is not shown, but we only have aerial photos.

PB also asked the group to inform him whether they preferred FLAGGIS to use a coloured map (which hides dataset symbols) or a monochrome map.

Action: ***Continual evaluation of FLAG-GIS by all in group***

6. Red River Basin GIS – use of maps (David Crichton)

DC reported that floodwater from the Red River, a major river system that flows north, from America to Canada, flooded parts of North Dakota in 1997, which resulted in more damage and loss of life than any of the preceding floods.

Since then, both the USA & Canadian governments have published a comprehensive GIS system, known as the Red River Basin Decision Information Network. It is an internet-based decision support system, and contains information about water management within the basin, including databases, references, technical tools, communication tools and GIS data.

Information is available at www.rrbdin.org.

7. ABI statement of principles (David Crichton)

The ABI statement of principles has been revised and comes into effect in November 2006. The ABI will now apply the 1 in 75 year rule (return period) and no insurer will provide an insurance quote if the property falls within this rule. Existing customers will still benefit, but the excess has gone up, e.g. £20-50K (for domestic and family businesses) and it is limited to a condition that flood defences will be scheduled for completion in 5 years.

However, there is an issue that no 1 in 75year flood event map has been produced for Scotland, and insurers may instead use the 1 in 100/200 year rule. DC also reported that Scotland is further at a disadvantage as it is more vulnerable to snow melt.

DC reported that climate change has not been taken into account by the ABI, but that could change, and insurers may start to use the 1 in 100/200 year rule.

ID raised that Councillors should be made aware of flooding, such as through seminars. PB said that this would be best done through the Development Plan.

8. Development of Coastal Management Policy

As SEPA will shortly be launching their 2nd generation flood, maps for tidal flooding, it was felt that this group will be relaunched. MT hoped to get money from the East Coastal Partnership, but can't at the present, as they cannot give money to LAs. However, it was highlighted that there is a need to engage with members with regards to climate change and the likely impacts it may have on the coast.

Action: *Malcolm Taberner*

9. Environment Monitoring report

This paper was brought up for discussion at the last meeting, but it has since been revised with new figures. The data shows that most new developments seeking planning permission in areas at risk from flooding are for domestic extensions, with only 39 planning applications out of 2000 granted consent in 2004. The second indicator examining planning applications proposed in the undeveloped coast showed that the majority of new builds (mainly for dwellinghouses) have been refused. Where planning applications for new dwellings were approved by members, it was against offers recommendation, which is a concern for liability. DC raised the Fife Solution that under SPP7, planners can engage with Building Control to insist developers raise the standard of the proposed development so that Councillors cannot overrule this request.

10. Development Plan Update

Aberdeen City

LPI will start on 21 February 2006.

Aberdeenshire

ALP – The 'further modifications' will go to ISC on 26 January 2006 to seek members' agreement on the officers response to objections since the LPI, and to progress to adoption.

NEST – Work is ongoing for the next strategic development plan, and the Scottish Executive has proposed to use Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Councils as a case study for this new type of plan. An issues paper will be produced first, which will explore the vision/aims of the plan, with a view to seek comments on them.

11. Major Development Proposals

WPR – the group briefly discussed the possible flood risk implications of the preferred route announced by the Transport Minister. The southern route below Milltimber is at risk from flooding, as there are many streams and marshes, which will require further investigation. The safeguarding map will be produced by the end of January.

Third Don Crossing – Planning application was submitted this week, but 5 sessions are booked for the LPI in the city.

Chris Anderson Stadium at Linksfield – It was reported that all along the Queenslink, seawater rises underneath (it does not flood from the sea above ground) and this issue will have to be addressed in the near future.

12. AOBC

The fifth biennial report has now been published and is now available on the Council's website. MT raised that Professor Alan Werrity commented on the Biennial flood reports, saying that he would like these reports to include details of the location and timing of the flood event. However, MT thought this could lead to blight in areas, and should only include information at the district level.

The Scotland and Northern Ireland Forum for Environmental Research (SNIFFER) conference will be held by the Scottish Executive, with Nora Radcliffe in February 2006. The purpose of the conference is to identify where research is necessary for flood risk management schemes. AC will be attending this event, and will represent NESFLAG as Chair. It was asked that AC raise the issue of the flood insurance withdrawal strategy for areas at risk from flooding at the conference.

The date of the next meeting will be Wednesday 3rd May 2006 at 2pm in Committee Room 4, Woodhill House, Aberdeen.