

**North East Scotland Flood Liaison and Advice Group
Held –Room G, Woodhill House
2pm, Wednesday 25th May 2005**

Meeting Note

Present

Andrew Carruthers, Chair (Aberdeenshire Council)
Alison Hogge (Aberdeenshire Council)
Douglas Gray (Aberdeenshire Council)
Malcolm Taberner (Aberdeenshire Council)
Linda Matheson (Aberdeenshire Council)
Susan Cooksley (Macaulay Institute)
Justin Prigmore
Ian Francis (RSPB)
David Cameron (SEPA)
Bill Murphy (Aberdeen City Council)
Jim Lister (Scottish Water)
Daniel Lewis (Aberdeen City)
David MacIntosh (Emergency Planning Unit)
Emma Williams (Aberdeenshire Council)

1. Apologies

Richard Hoggins, Building Control (Aberdeen City Council)
David Crichton (Insurance Industry Representative)
Nicola Abrams (SEPA)
Piers Blaxter (Aberdeenshire Council)

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 reported back to the group on locations where bog bursts may occur in Aberdeenshire. Malcolm circulated a brief summary of his notes to the group and he stated that using 4 maps from NESBReC he identified 4 roads and 3 rivers that may be affected by bog bursts. Malcolm reported that any impact of bog bursts (which is caused by the drying out of a bog followed by sudden rain fall) will be upstream and have minimum impact on people and utilities. It was reported to the group that NESBReC hold higher resolution maps, which contain more detail. Andrew Carruthers stated that any future work will only be necessary if there is an identified risk to people and utilities.

Action Malcolm Taberner

5m soakaways – It was reported that contact has been made between the building control officers in the City and the Shire along with Scottish Water and SEPA. However, no meeting has taken place, but it is likely that one will be held before the next NESFLAG meeting.

Action: Alison Hogge, Jim Lister and David Cameron

Building Control - It was reported that Richard Hoggins will be representing the City Council's building control team at future NESFLAG meetings.

4. Wetlands and Water Storage, presentation by Ian Francis (RSPB)

Ian Francis gave an informative presentation to the group on the regeneration and revitalisation of existing and former wetland areas, adding that they have a flood storage function and are a potential tourist asset. Ian reported that wetlands have been disappearing over North East Scotland for hundreds of years as a result of peat cuttings, draining land to make way for agriculture and afforestation, which has effected hydrology, and these activities have affected the land's ability to absorb and store water.

Ian stated that a strategic vision is required to revitalise existing and former wetland areas, and new legislation such as the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, river basin management planning, and the single farm payment scheme will help to regenerate wetland areas.

Ian also discussed the North East Scotland wetland project scheme, which has identified new and existing sites where there is potential to transform them back to new wetland areas. He also added that there was potential to restore former forest wetlands.

Ian then asked the group if they had any questions for him, and at this point Malcolm Taberner asked if Ian would like to discuss his Wetland Project with his team, which Ian accepted.

Issues relating to how wetland areas can be incorporated into Soft SuDS scheme were also raised, and Andrew Carruthers added that the NESFLAG GIS system will be able to hold data on wetland areas. It was also added that the next development plan will need to consider wetland areas in terms of where development will and will not be permitted.

5. SPP7/PAN69

Hilary McBean's note on SSP7 was circulated to the group. A concern on land raising was raised with regards to how to respond to developers wishing to build on the flood plain by raising the height of the land. The interpretation agreed was that land raise should only be accepted if it is related to flood prevention schemes. On a different matter, it was added that there could be a note relating to a scaled approach to flooding where a proposed development may attract elderly or disabled or large crowds. However, the group agreed to

the current content of Hilary's note and it was added that the note will provide first hand advice to development control officers and should be distributed to their teams at their team meetings. Andrew also added that it may be turned into supplementary planning guidance in the future.

Action: Development Control (Douglas Gray)

6. Coastal Flooding

Andrew circulated to the group a copy of a draft remit and work programme for development of a Coastal Flood Strategy and asked for any feedback to be forwarded to Malcolm Taberner (Malcolm.Taberner@aberdeenshire.gov.uk). Andrew suggested that it could go to the coastal forum to be finalised, and David Cameron (SEPA) added that their coastal flood maps for 100, 200 and 1000 year floods will be available on the internet later on in the year (most likely September).

7. FLAGGIS project, stage 2

It was reported that the NESFLAG - GIS Project, which allows flooding data to be shared between partners, will be ready late June 2005. Existing partners will receive their passwords in June and they will be able to access the GIS system on the extranet at that time. Andrew advised that training may be necessary, but this has still to be decided.

8. SuDS Working Group Update

It was reported that the latest draft of the best practice guidelines have now been completed and will now be circulated to members of NESFLAG once the working group have seen the latest draft. After this, work will be carried out to change the best practise guidelines into supplementary planning guidance, which will then go out to public consultation towards the end of the year. Andrew asked if Bill Murphy could look at the maintenance chapter and provide a maintenance procedure.

Action: Bill Murphy

9. Development Plan Update

City – the finalised local plan will be going to committee in June and will then be subject to a local plan enquiry thereafter.

Aberdeenshire – Awaiting the Reporter's report from the local plan inquiry, which is expected in June. Adoption is likely to be in nine months, depending on if a further inquiry is needed.

Cairngorms National Park Authority – They are currently preparing their own local plan, which will be in accordance with the proposed planning bill.

10. Western Peripheral Route – consultation on flooding issues

It was reported that all the information on the proposed southern routes has been provided. Ian Francis reported that he asked Babbie whether they would

be creating any new areas of habitat, as they will be removing 300 hectares of countryside to build the new road. However, the response he was given was no, as they will not be providing any money for works beyond the road envelope.

11. Major Development Proposals

It was reported that a development brief is currently being prepared for the Uryside Parkland area proposed as part of the housing application, and information is requested from Scottish Water in relation to the siting of pitches and changing facilities within the floodplain. It was suggested that we should be looking for informal recreation that requires little maintenance. It was also identified that there may be a need to clarify local plan policy on the relative merits of informal and formal recreation in flood plains.

12. AOCB

A member of Aberdeenshire Council's Natural Heritage Team attended a conference on the Water Framework Directive where the Controlled Activities Regulations (2005) were released, and are currently being debated in the Scottish Parliament. It was reported that there may be conflicts between the new Regulations and existing planning procedures – something to look at more closely.

It was also reported that the RSPB '*Go with the flow*' publication is available on the Internet.

13. Topics for the next meeting

- Five minute information bulletin from the Forestry Commission on funding for riparian woodland.
- SEPA flood maps (presentation).

The date of the next meeting was agreed for Monday 22 August 2005, 2pm in Woodhill House, Committee Room 5.