

**North East Scotland Flood Liaison and Advice Group
Held –Room J, Woodhill House
2pm, Wednesday 30th August 2006**

Meeting Note

Present

Andrew Carruthers (Aberdeenshire Council)	AEC (Chair)
Alison Hogge (Aberdeenshire Council)	AH
Isobel Davidson (Aberdeenshire Council)	ID
Nicola Abrams (SEPA)	NA
Malcolm Taberner (Aberdeenshire Council)	MT
Daniel Lewis (Aberdeen City Council)	DL
David MacIntosh (Emergency Planning Unit)	DM
Adam Craigmyle (City)	AC
David Crichton (Insurance Representative)	DC
Douglas Gray (Aberdeenshire Council)	DG

1. Apologies

Jim Lister (Scottish Water)
Linda Mathieson (Aberdeenshire Council)
Piers Blaxter (Aberdeenshire Council)
Richard Hoggins (Aberdeen City Council)

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Amend Item 6 to delete “Ten” under SUDS Guidance.

Item 7 – clarification for NA.

3. Matters Arising

Development Plans – AEC has received information from Tamsin Morris regarding the council’s involvement in the River Basin Management Plan. DC said that the insurance industry and WWF are concerned that SEPA appear to be ignoring the River Basin Management Groups.

4. SuDS

Scottish Water (SW) has published on their website guidance for urban drainage systems (Sewers for Scotland). SCOTS (representatives of the technical side of local authorities) had a meeting with SW last week, and they clarified that the guidance is an “initial draft” and was published on the website to highlight SW’s directions for SUDS. Nonetheless, Aberdeenshire Council has serious concerns with the draft document, as it only promotes 3 types of SuDS (detention ponds and basins and underground storage), and it states

that SuDS ponds must be at least 30m from buildings, which rules out the use of SuDS on small sites.

At the SCOTS meeting, it also transpired that Sewers for Scotland and the Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003 are linked. Also, the preparation of Sewers for Scotland will be delegated to the Scottish Executive.

It was also raised that the definition of public SuDS, which is what SW is required to treat under the Sewers Act may not include road SuDS. Overall, there is a concern about whether or not to carry on with SuDS.

NA said she has received no further feedback from their office (she sits as a SuDs representative for SEPA). However, SEPA are just as concerned with the guidance as NESFLAG is, and as they have a strong say on water quality, they will also have a strong say on SW's draft guidance.

It was also highlighted that developers are concerned with SW's draft guidance, and if Sewers for Scotland was adopted as currently drafted SEPA would have to find alternatives. In the meantime, NA said that SEPA would object to any planning application with no SuDS under the equivalent binding rule, as SEPA is interested principally in water quality.

* * *

DC reported that the insurance industry is quite ignorant of SUDS. They tend to ask various questions on how ponds, which is what the insurance industry view SuDS as, could affect properties. If this ignorance continues, it could result in property owners not getting mortgages, and houses built adjacent to SuDS not being bought, as they cannot be insured. It was concluded that the best way to inform the Association of British Insurers (ABI) of SuDS is through DC.

Two courses of action were then discussed:

- a. The need to identify what NESFLAG can collectively do regarding SW's guidance and insurance industry's misunderstanding of SuDS.
- b. What do local authorities do if SW adopts the SuDS guidance in its current form?

With regards to SW's guidance, the group suggested the following courses of action:

1. SCOTS could contact the Scottish Minutes directly;
2. NESFLAG could write to SW as we have national status under NPPG 7;
3. hold a meeting with other FLAG chairs;
4. write formally to the Scottish SuDS Working Party;
5. write to the Flood Issues Advisory Committee, and include ABI; and
6. seek comments from house builders.

Action: AEC and MT to write to SW and Scottish Executive (copying SEPA into the letters). AEC and MT to liaise with NESFLAG members prior to sending final draft.

With regards to the insurance industries lack of knowledge on the various types and risks of SuDS, it was suggested by DC that he could submit a paper (which could be from NESFLAG and other FLAGs in Scotland) to the Chief Executives of the different insurance companies, which they would have to table at the Chair of General Insurance meeting. This issue could also be raised at a FLAG chair meeting.

Action: DC to prepare a paper on the above.

DC raised that the Solvency II draft framework directive is out for consultation, and will come into effect next year. It is unknown what implications there will be for local authorities, but it will result in insurers taking a much tougher approach on properties in flood risk areas, and it will be more important to insurers if local authorities have an active FLAG.

With regards to the second action - who will take over SuDS if the SW guidance is produced as currently drafted?

It was highlighted that it will cost a lot of money and there will be maintenance responsibility issues, similar to residential open space at present.

MT said that a maintenance deal with homeowners could be negotiated, but this would not include adopting them. However, it would require a legal agreement, which could merge with the agreement on landscaping and open space.

Four possibilities were highlighted:

1. individuals could maintain them;
2. a factor could be hired to maintain SuDS (Solvency Bond could be used, which lasts for 25 years and provides cover if a company goes into liquidation (bonds are secured by the insurance industry)).
3. *councils take over the maintenance of SuDS, but ownership lies elsewhere; or
4. the council takes complete ownership.

* Money from all house developments in Aberdeenshire could be ring fenced into one account for Landscape Services to maintain them.

5. FLAGGIS Project

So far there have been 160 external hits on the website, which demonstrates that some use is being made of it, although more datasets are still required.

Action: Piers Blaxter to contact BW who will contact Aberdeen City's ICT team to forward Piers various GIS overlays within the City.

MT has offered a new dataset, which predicts the areas likely to be flooded by the River Ythan during a 100year flood event.

Action: MT to send PB a copy of the above dataset.

Licensing issues have delayed the release of SEPA's Second Generation Flood Maps, but they are hoping to launch them in October. It was reported that PB would be submitting the FLAGGIS project to COSLA's excellence award.

SNIFFER have commissioned Heriot Watt University to carry out research on GIS data required to support local authorities in their decision making process in areas affected by flooding. Members from the university visited Aberdeenshire Council to have a look at FLAGGIS for themselves, and were surprised at how far advanced FLAGGIS had been developed. Their GIS will be locally based rather than nationally based.

6. Development of Coastal Management

Alasdair Smith's replacement, Graham Craig will be working on it. MT will be preparing a brief for the project.

7. Development Plan Update

Aberdeenshire Local Plan – was been adopted in June 2006, and the six-week period for formal challenge has now expired. No challenges have been received.

Aberdeen City Local Plan – have started the second stage of the local plan inquiry, which focuses on land allocations. This stage is expected to last two months, and is programmed to finish in December. It is anticipated that the Reporters report will be published in mid 2007.

Structure Plan – preparatory work is currently being undertaken. The Structure Plan will be developed in line with forthcoming legislation, and will be developed like a Strategic Development Plan. It will be thinner and strategically orientated, with a timescale of 25 years. Initial discussions on the vision statement were discussed with members this week.

8. Major Development Proposals

Development Brief for Inverurie is now on the Aberdeenshire Council website, which includes allowance for one in two hundred year flood events and was approved this week. The development includes 1000 houses, parkland and a business park.

BW reported that the coast protection scheme along Aberdeen beach is currently underway and is going very well. The work should be completed by September. The sand recharge has successfully been added along the existing beach, and the hard rock is to be added shortly. A beach management plan will be implemented once all the work is complete.

AC and BW left the meeting at this point.

It was reported that David's Mill will be redeveloped for 600 homes and employment land, but there are likely to be flooding issues.

9. AOCB

- AH is collecting baseline data for the next Structure Plan, and asked members if they could provide data on the need for new/upgrade/repair of flood defences, sewage works and pumping stations, in relation to climate change and rising population/water needs.

MT said he may have data on flood defences, and that BM from the city may also have similar information. Scottish Water's Pearl Machray may also have data on sewers.

- DC listed several publications on climate change and the insurance industry:
 1. Lloyds of London report: Insurance industry needs to take more proactive approach as we have passed the point of no return.
 2. Organisation of Economic Coastal Development report.
 3. Scottish Climate Trends – data at regional levels.
 4. Chief Risk Officer in Geneva produced a report on climate change.
- Dee Catchment Management Plan will be going out for consultation in September. It runs parallel to the 3DeeVision project, but it will be absorbed into the River Basin Maintenance Plan.
- Gary Pendry from Heriot Watt University will be presenting his research on flooding (which was commissioned by the Scottish Executive) at the Royal Society of Edinburgh, George Street, Edinburgh on 29th November 2006.

10. Topics and date for next meeting

1. SuDS
2. River Basin Management Plan – Tamsin Morris

The date of the next meeting will be on Friday 1 December 2006 in Room J, Woodhill House, Aberdeen at 2pm