

## **Flooding Summit – Summary**

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, Mr Lochhead, along with the Minister for Environment, Mr Russell and the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change, Mr Stevenson, held a flooding summit on 10 September in Perth for invited stakeholders to discuss flood risk management issues in Scotland. Over 130 delegates attended from a diverse range of organisations including local government, academia, emergency services, the insurance industry and consultancies.

### **Background**

The First Minister announced on 5 September that the Scottish Government would introduce a Flooding Bill in this parliamentary session. We recognise that the current flooding legislation will not meet the requirements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and, in light of the recent widespread and devastating flooding in England, sought the views of stakeholders and practitioners about what Scotland needs to do to meet the challenges of an increased risk of flooding.

### **Aims**

Mr Lochhead invited delegates to discuss how we can take a more modern and sustainable approach to flood risk management and work together to provide longer term solutions. Mr Lochhead asked practitioners to consider the following;

- What legislation is needed to support a more sustainable, modern approach to flood risk that will adapt to the impacts of climate change?
- How can we make flexible funding available and join up different funding streams?
- Who should have responsibility for flood risk management at local, catchment and national levels?

### **Summit events**

The National Flood Forum kicked off the day by setting the scene and providing an insight into the realities of flooding. There were further presentations in the morning from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), the Environment Agency for England and Wales, Glasgow City Council, Scottish Water, Association of British Insurers and the Scottish Government Planning. This was followed by an open floor discussion session facilitated by Dr Andrew Black from Dundee University.

The afternoon session commenced with presentations from Professor Charles Ainger from MWH on behalf of the Flooding Issues Advisory Committee, Dr Tom Nisbet, Forest Research and Mike Donaghy of WWF. Again an open floor discussion session was facilitated by Dr Andrew Black from Dundee University.

The points raised were grouped under the following headings;

### **Legal Framework**

- Reduce red tape associated with SEPA and Scottish Water

- Allow household defences such as demountable barriers to be included within the remit of 'flood prevention'.
- Provide support for local authorities to deliver interim solutions, e.g demountable barriers
- Ensure legislation addresses all forms of flooding

### **Funding**

- Make available resources that realistically deal with the scale of the problem faced nationally
- Focus funding based on assessment of risk with clear prioritisation criteria
- Ensure coastal flooding risk is not overlooked
- If insufficient funding for full solution, make sure interim solutions can be funded, which may include 'softer' engineering options

### **Delivery Details**

- Streamline processes
- Building regulations – use these to require appropriate design for floodplains and ensure that compliance monitoring is in place
- Ensure uptake of natural approaches to flood management in coastal zones

### **Others**

- Language: flood management not flood prevention
- To What extent must delivery be based on science vs faith
- Trail of soft approaches – how effective are they
- Must look at critical infrastructure when plan for floods – electricity substations, water treatment plants, major roads etc

A full list of the points raised is attached at Annex A.

To conclude the discussion sessions George Thorley, a Non-Executive Director of the Scottish Government, chaired the final session providing an opportunity to delegates to clarify and add to points made in the earlier sessions.

In conclusion, the main issues that came out of the Summit were;

1. the need to make funding more flexible and available across different funding streams
2. more partnership working for a strategic catchment based approach
3. co-ordination of partnership working, who is best placed to lead at both local and national level?
4. the need to streamline processes; reduce red tape and delivery time.

These outcomes will help develop flood risk management policy in Scotland and the development of the Flooding Bill as announced by the First Minister on 5 September. Further information, summit papers and presentations can be found on our webpage; <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Water/Flooding/new>

## **Summary of the Flooding Summit Evaluation**

There were 25 Flooding Summit Evaluation Forms and 2 emailed comments submitted, plus 3 instances of oral feedback from stakeholders who were unable to attend. The feedback to the event was overwhelmingly positive with many of the contributors raising several issues. Most of the responses were favourable to a follow up event in Perth, although there were a couple of expressions of preference for changing the venue to either Edinburgh or Glasgow and also some points raised on domestic issues which we would hope to address.

The presence of Senior Cabinet Politicians and their evident desire to listen to the views of the participants was felt by many delegates to raise the profile of flooding and reflected the general acceptance that action is required. The breadth and quality of the presentations and speakers was particularly appreciated, as was the attendance of a wide range of high level industry experts. 30 responses indicated that the concept of the summit was good and offered a joined up, focussed approach, provided the opportunity for free and open discussion and presented a wide range of views. There was generally a warm reception to the proposed Flooding Bill with 20 suggestions raised in relation to the creation of the legislation.

## Questions raised at the Flooding Summit, Perth, 10 September 2007

### Legal framework

- Require periodic re-assessment of the level of protection provided by flood prevention schemes
- Reduce red tape associated with SEPA and Scottish Water (LA request)
- Allow household defences such as demountable barriers to be included within the remit of 'flood prevention'
- Require response and recovery phases in flood risk management planning
- Provide support for local authorities to deliver interim solutions, e.g. demountables
- Ensure legislation addresses all forms of flooding
- Require people in floodplains to take out insurance?? (but this assumes it will be available and at an affordable cost)
- Legislation needs to recognise the uncertainty inherent in predictions of climate change (and indeed in any assessments of risk)
- Look at development on raised land as a loophole in SPP7
- Ensure legislation allows flood routing issues to be accommodated: think not only about the risks of flooding in one community, but what happens to the water downstream and any displaced water held in managed storage.
- Clarify land drainage authority responsibilities.
- Legislation should allow authorities to develop schemes which draw on as full a range of options as is needed to provide locally appropriate solutions, and in combination as required
- Legislation should require written clarification of roles in multi-partner delivery of solutions
- Incorporate land managers in decision-making/planning
- Focus funding on assessment of risk
- Increase emphasis on social dimensions in scheme evaluation

### Funding

- Make available resources that realistically deal with the scale of problem faced nationally
- Ensure coastal flooding risk not overlooked: has potential to cause very major impact even though frequency may be low
- Consider drawing on developers and insurers for scheme funding

### Delivery details

- Design standards for rainfall – is the 30-year return period really the right way forward?

- Streamline processes – reduce delays in getting measures in place on the ground. E.g. reduce number of public consultations, promote proactive risk management
- Building regulations – use these to require appropriate design for floodplains and ensure that compliance monitoring is in place
- Give support to development of approaches which can offer support for people at risk of pluvial flooding
- Ensure uptake of natural approaches to flood management in the coastal zone
- Language: flood *management* not *prevention*
- Ensure that recommendations of flood risk assessments are complied with (sounds like procedures are in place but not always followed: possibly a compliance monitoring issue)
- Consider lowering threshold for activating Belwin formula for respite care
- Consider enhancing support for raising community resilience
- Continue to invest in community education and awareness raising

#### **Others**

- To what extent must delivery be based on science vs faith?
- Require routine/ongoing review of monitoring networks and quality of resultant data
- Trial of soft approaches – how effective are they?
- What to do about personal responsibilities? People need practical and effective help in getting to know how they can help themselves.
- A multi-function Forth crossing (flood defence and road crossing)?
- Uncertainty should be recognised explicitly in decision making. Allow for positive experimentation and change.
- Note role of home buyer in development process

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