

**FLOODING BILL CONSULTATION - PERTH CONCERT HALL  
7.30PM 15 APRIL 2008**

Top Table

Michael Russell – Minister for the Environment  
Stan Irvine – Scottish Government  
Chris Spray - SEPA  
Cllr Ian Miller – Perth and Kinross Council  
Jim Valentine – Perth and Kinross Council

Also in Attendance:

Bob Irvine – Scottish Government  
Bernadette Malone – CEO Perth and Kinross Council  
Susan Veich – Perth and Kinross Council  
John Thomson - Perth and Kinross Council  
Charles Haggart - Perth and Kinross Council  
Graham Esson – Perth and Kinross Council  
Phil Gaskell – Scottish Natural Heritage  
Jim Conlin – Scottish Water  
Michael MacConnachie – SEPA

Cllr Ian Miller opened the meeting introducing the top table and the experts present in the front row.

The Minister explained the purpose of the consultation meeting was to develop new flooding legislation. Flooding will always happen and the reform of the old Flood Prevention (Scotland) Act 1961 was now necessary to bring it in line with the current day living. Climate change must be taken into consideration. Scotland has seen a sustained increase in rainfall over the last 30 years. It is the Governments intention to speed up the flood prevention procedural process. Legislation required to be more transparent. New flood prevention schemes would look into the wider picture and take account of river catchment areas. The Bill would also look into Reservoir Safety. He asked the floor for input and questions.

A local farmer from Bridge of Earn area complained about the very short notice given for the meeting. His concerns were that since the floods of 1932 and 1990 his flood banks had burst twice in the last 2 years. He felt the main blame lay through the ditches in the forests that were causing flash floods. Building on flood plains, land use and climate change too all contributed to the problem.

SPP7 planning guidance policy was explained. New developments initially are a matter for planning authorities and developers. The authorities are required by Regulation to consult with SEPA if the proposed development increases the number of buildings at risk being damaged from flooding. If SEPA advises against planning permission and the planning authority wishes to approve the application must be referred to the Scottish Ministers for scrutiny.

(SEPA) said that in the last 30 years there was 32% less days of snow lying. Climate change was having its effect. Intensive rain too was becoming a more regular occurrence throughout

Scotland. The River Earn can rise in volume by 50%. The west coast and east coast now differed in the levels of rainfall.

Concerns were made over building on flood plans. There are proposals in Almond Valley village to build 1800 new houses with 16 ponds to mop up the surface water. A householder from the area has real flooding concerns as she expects the new development will increase her houses flood risk. Recent flooding events has seen the water levels reach the bottom of her garden. (Her house lies only one foot higher) If the proposed development is permitted, more frequent and higher flash floods will occur through the extra surface water. She has insurance concerns too especially if she gets flooded regularly. Concerns were made over the length of time taken from the 1993 floods to the length time the Almondbank Flood Prevention scheme has been considered and has yet to be built. Supports new legislation to implement fully the EC legislation

The 16 ponds are SUD ponds to provide alternative space for water and compensate the run off from the hard surface areas. They do not however provide a Flood Prevention scheme

The floor supports SPP7 planning policy and it is felt that SEPA needs more powers and money.

The Council felt that building on flood plains is madness and should not be encouraged. In planning issues where SEPA, Scottish Water and Local Authorities are in dispute there is a need for a Local decision maker – Minister.

A call to emphasise better information in flooding areas was asked for. Raising awareness of Flood Risk areas could be disclosed within the new housing information packs that are to be introduced in December 2008.

Old infrastructure and old drainage systems too can exacerbate flooding problems.

Scottish Water called for future planning ahead and a need to working closer with local authorities. This is a call for the need for better integration between the local authorities and Scottish Water.

British Insurers felt Scotland was in a better position than in England on the development of flood plains. Insurance companies take account of run off areas as surface water drainage is a big problem. Sustainable drainage systems should be in place.

A policy to avoid all new development on flood plains is required. A higher flood risk to properties will result in higher insurance premiums. Pilot studies for improving house flood defences have been taken place to minimise flood damage. Houses that are regularly flooded have been made more resilient so that when they are flooded again, they can then be washed down with minimum damage. Making houses more resilient to flooding does mean the premiums will go up.

The forestry angle, hydrology, agriculture embankments and climate change policies all need to be included within the Flooding Bill.

Attention was drawn to 1993 Perth flood where a drain at Perth Prison and Craigiehall ditch were found completely choked, increasing the flooding problem. The amount of flooding would not have been as bad had the drainage system been kept clear by Perth and Kinross Council. Perth and Kinross Council now have telemetry which monitors the drainage problem.

Farmers are not encouraged through legislation to clear out blocked ditches.

A suggestion for Building regulations and building standards (A guide into making properties more flood resilient) should be included within the Flooding Bill.

New houses should not be built in areas with a history of flood risk.

A question was asked whether the local authority would take responsibility, if a house gets flooded through a new housing development. The planning system must be robust enough to stop this from happening. The Council will follow the 1 in 200 years flood event guidelines. This limit though may not be high enough.

SEPA are receiving more pressures on flood risk.

Rural Affairs and Environmental Report has just been published.

Meeting closed at 8.30 pm.