

**NATIONAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP ON FLOODING ISSUES
SUSTAINABLE FLOOD MANAGEMENT SUB-GROUP**

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2004, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh.

Present: Alan Burdekin (Scottish Executive (SE), Environment Group, Air, Climate and Engineering Division – chair).

Scottish Executive: Debi Garft (SE, Environment Group, Air, Climate and Engineering Division); Lyn Wilson (SE, Environment Group, Air, Climate and Engineering Division – minutes); Hazel Gallagher (SE, Environment Group, Air, Climate and Engineering Division)

David Howell (Scottish Natural Heritage); Mike Donaghy (Environment LINK); John Greaves (COSLA); David Wilson (Scottish Water (SW)); Prof. Charles Ainger (Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management); David Harley (Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)); Peter Bolton (Consultant); Alan Werritty (University of Dundee).

Apologies: Jonathan Chapman (Environment Agency), Gillian Hood (SE, Environment Group, Water Environment Division).

Agenda item 2: Welcome

1. Alan Burdekin (AB) welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their time. He introduced June Graham and Hazel Gallagher, who were attending for the first time.

Agenda Item 3: Minutes of previous meeting and action points

2. Minutes of the last Sustainable Flood Management Sub-Group meeting were approved.

3. Debi Garft (DG) went through the action points. David Howell (DHo) apologised for the delay in producing feedback from the event on 17th June. He handed out two papers for discussion at item 4 on the agenda. AB explained that he was waiting for a response from Solicitors regarding the use of compulsory purchase orders to purchase areas of wetlands to use for flood storage. He will report back to NTAG when he has a definitive answer.

4. DG confirmed that paper NTAG2004(19) had been revised in light of discussions at that last meeting and the comments received on the draft principles after that meeting. She also confirmed that the Guidance Sub-Group will consider how guidance on sustainable flood management might be taken forward at its next meeting on 8 September.

Agenda item 4: Feedback from the Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) Best Practice Seminar on sustainable flood management – David Howell (SNH) to lead.

5. DHo presented two papers on feedback from the SNH Best Practice Seminar on 17 June 2004. He explained that the first paper gave feedback from the morning brainstorming session, which encouraged open and frank discussion on flood issues with attendee having no information about NTAG work. Paper 2 presented the feedback from the afternoon session,

which took place after participants had been given details of NTAG's work on sustainable flood management. DHo explained that local authorities were well represented at the event; as were academia and environmental NGOs. However there were notable absences i.e. rural land owners, property developers and community interest groups.

6. DHo explained that participants welcomed the opportunity to comment but at the same time they will expect their views to be taken into account. In particular participants took the view that we need a more proactive approach to flood risk instead of waiting until severe flooding has taken place. AB asked if the audience were aware of SEPA's flood risk map. He added that even where a flood risk is identified the proactive approach may not be supported without an actual flood event. He reminded Members that the SE cannot force a local authority to take forward a flood prevention scheme. Alan Werritty (AW) agreed that local authorities are reluctant to pursue a proactive response without public opinion and support.

7. Mike Donaghy (MD) suggested that it might be better to hold this discussion once Members had been given a chance to read and reflected upon the feedback. AB explained that we had hoped to agree the principles/objectives/definitions at this meeting in order to present the conclusions at the next NTAG meeting.

8. DHo summarised the 2nd paper, which gives the feedback from the afternoon's workshops. He highlighted concerns about the:

- use of jargon;
- need to consider the audience;
- need for more catchment management planning, and
- ensure that European initiatives to address flood events are adequately addressed and that there is sufficient Scottish input to them.

Participants also called for better integration of the planning processes and it was suggested that NTAG could take the lead in advising how the bodies involved might interact. AB explained that this was beyond the direct remit of NTAG.

9. The audience agreed that the definition should cover river and coastal flooding as well as sewer and ponding flooding but it should be made clear that it doesn't cover household flooding from burst pipes etc.

10. There was general unease over the use of word 'justice' in the objectives section of the paper. They felt that overall idea was correct but a more straight forward form of wording should be used. It was suggested that social objectives be revised to provide for opportunities to enhance community amenities.

11. The draft principles for sustainable flood management (paragraph 10 of the paper "What is sustainable flood management?") were discussed and the following comment made about each.

- a) OK
- b) It was suggested that in line 3 "met" should be replaced by "embraced".
- c) OK
- d) There was concern over the phrase 'whole life view' and what it means in practice.

- e) This point prompted the most discussion and it was suggested that NTAG revisit this principle. It was suggested that it might be difficult for local authorities to follow the “do nothing” option if it is under pressure to put a scheme in place, particularly after a flood event.
- f) Participants questioned whether this principle gave due consideration to landscape and geological conservation as well as Scotland’s built heritage.
- g) It was suggested that economic regeneration should be tied in with enhancement of amenities.
- h) This should stay as a principle however it was suggested that NTAG review the wording once measurable indicators have been established.
- i) This will require measurable indicators and should be revisited once the indicators are in place.
- j) Participants asked how “transparency” would be measured and a “central” source of information was considered better than a “single” source of information.
- k) & l) The wording of these principles was deemed too nebulous and NTAG was invited to revisit them to try explaining more clearly what they mean.

12. Everyone agreed that a systematic approach is needed to tackle sustainable flood management to ensure that bureaucracy is minimised and that all stakeholders can learn from experiences, both good and bad.

13. AW reiterated that it is important to tailor the language to meet the audience and that we know who the audience is. However he recognised that it would be difficult to come up with one style that would meet the needs of all stakeholders. Members agreed that while the definitions need to be given in clear, board, transparent terms, the principles, since they are aimed more at practitioners, can use more technical, specialised language. Charles Ainger (CA) agreed that this will be particularly relevant when we start preparing indicators for measuring the objectives. AW commented that the indicators will help make the link with the Guidance which will also be written in technical terms for practitioners.

14. AW said that while the seminar highlighted how colleagues have tried to incorporate sustainability into their solutions, he was disappointed that there had been no discussion around the extent to which sustainability had been achieved. Nor did the audience challenge the case study presentations.

15. AW added that any confusion which still exists over sustainable flood management may be due to the fact that the definitions/principles are aimed at three different audiences i.e. those taking forward flood prevention schemes, those involved in the planning process and other responsible bodies. It is therefore important to establish the audience first and then tailor the language accordingly. DHo suggested that it would help if we knew who the “responsible authorities” will be.

16. AB confirmed that the definition etc. on sustainable flood management will be used more widely than the Flood Prevention (Scotland) Act 1961 (“the 1961 Act”) but the

guidance produced will initially be technical guidance on taking forward flood prevention schemes under the 1961 Act. He reminded Members that the 2003 Act calls for responsible authorities to promote rather than maximise sustainable flood management.

17. CA commented that the principles need to be written in general terms with everyone in mind, but the indicators can be written in a more technical language. David Wilson (DW) added that it is important that the responsible authorities and SEPA are made aware of this work. AW agreed and said that he hoped that responsible authorities would use this work as a starting point for writing guidance.

18. AB explained that the SE would like to bring the Sub-Group's work on the definition, objectives and principles to a conclusion for NTAG meeting in September. We would also like to have some preliminary work done on measurable indicators for that meeting. AB reminded Members that NTAG is scheduled to finish in September. However if we are to make a case for it to continue beyond 2004 it would be helpful if we had some significant conclusions to present to Ministers.

19. Members agreed that it was important to produce a further draft of the paper to reflect today's feedback and add to the audit trail. AW suggested that someone could go through all the feedback and produce a further draft for NTAG to consider; at the same time work could start on key performance indicators.

20. CA suggested that the next step should be to look at the feedback from the morning brainstorming session and check nothing has been omitted; then take the afternoon feedback and structure this data to fit with the existing draft for discussion at the NTAG meeting on 5 August.

Action point 1: CA to consider the feedback from the SNH seminar and today's meeting and present conclusions to NTAG on 5 August.

Action point 2: DHo agreed to redraft the feedback documents and circulate them, via secretariat, to Members to discussion at NTAG on 5 August.

21. MD asks what NTAG's role is in promoting this work in the planning process. AB said that NTAG has a role in play in raising awareness. Peter Bolton (PB) suggested that sustainable flood management is the driver for a more proactive approach. He added that while that there is no statutory requirement for local authorities to adopt a proactive approach, the provisions to promote sustainable flood management in the 2003 Act would ensure that a link is made between planning and flood prevention. He added that in developing a river basin management plan local authorities cannot ignore planners and vice versa. AW suggests that this thinking need to be embedded at a catchment level. John Greaves (JG) suggested that SPP7 and the PAN due out soon will help provide the link between flood prevention and planning.

22. CA commented that both urban and rural planning have roles to play in promoting sustainable flood management and neither can be neglected. He added that when we talk about 'natural process' we assume that they only occur in rural areas. It is important that we remember that urban design can involve natural processes as well.

Agenda Item 5: Next steps including developing Key Performance Indicators for measuring sustainable flood management.

23. CA presents this item and distributed a short note outlining possible “next steps” for taking forward this work. Members agreed that task one should involve processing SNH feedback from the seminar in June and using this data to finalise the draft definition, objectives and principles.

24. Members also agreed that setting measurable indicators for objectives and principles should be task 2. CA explained that this stage should involve identifying the related work already carried out in Scotland. He added that the indicators set will have implications for the SE on how they take forward a proactive approach and how local authorities take forward proposals for flood prevention schemes.

25. Task 3, 4 and 5 are more speculative at this stage and will follow a public consultation by the SE on the outcomes from tasks 1 and 2. Task 3 identifies the need to ensure that we consult with specific stakeholders who have been less represented to-date on NTAG and at the SNH seminar i.e. property developers, flooded owners.

26. Tasks 4 and 5 are about (culture) change and need to be led by local authorities. CA explained that experience shows that a pilot study is needed to look at past practice or a new project and try out the new principles on it. CA commented that there is lots of experience out there but we need to be able to gather together examples of ‘best practice’ and made them available to practitioners when they need it.

27. AB suggested that this information can be fed into SCOTS, which has the structure to disseminate the information. JG commented that information sharing between local authorities varies greatly across the country but things have improved. He reminded Members that NTAG Member, Adam Olejnik, is the SCOTS chair at the moment. DW added that FLAGs had a role to play in disseminating. Members agreed that there is definitely a role for SCOTS and FLAGs here.

28. DW called for a national report (of incidents) to be pulled together to try and establish flood path mapping/overland flooding. He added that the latter is not yet fully understood and at the moment it is not clear who is responsible for this type of flooding. AB agreed that that future guidance must consider how Scottish Water and local authorities can work together on these responsibilities.

29. CA highlighted the need for a first set of performance indicators to take to NTAG on 23 September.

Agenda Item 6: Consider how technical guidance on sustainable flood management might be produced.

Agenda item 7: Consider how practitioners might be encouraged to implement technical guidance on sustainable flood management.

30. Members discussed the proposed guidance on sustainable flood management. AW commented that we must consider all potential users and interested parties, such as SEPA, planners, developers, insurers and householders, and how we can reach these audiences. AB

added that the guidance might also be useful to individuals whose properties are at risk of flooding so that they can protect their properties. AB suggested that Flood Awareness Week is an obvious way to disseminating information and make people aware of guidance. AB gave Members some details of SEPA's two day conference this autumn (30 September and 1 October).

31. DG suggested that it would be next spring at the earliest before we would start writing guidance on sustainable flood management.

32. CA said that proposed Tasks 4 & 5 are all about engaging with stakeholders and this will involve offering advice on how the guidance might be implemented.

Agenda Item 8: Flood path mapping in urban areas – pilot study David Wilson (Scottish Water) to lead.

33. DW introduced paper NTAG2004(28), which proposes that the SE considers funding a pilot study on Flood Path Mapping. The paper gave Members an overview of the need for mapping tools to assess potential urban flood routes and to recommend the procurement of a potential flood path mapping pilot study to develop end user guidance.

34. DW explained that overland flow flooding happens regularly and occurs when water does not reach the sewers or water courses and collects and pools in low lying land. Although developers must show that new developments will have no new flooding impact they lack the tools to do this well at the moment. He explained that effective tools can and are being developed to identify and understand this particular type of flood risk, enabling new developments to be built with the confidence that no new flood risk has been inadvertently built in.

35. DW said that the pilot study would cost between £5,000 and £10,000. It will look at potential water/flood paths and possible solutions, for example enhanced SuDS, in one or two local authority areas. DW asked if the SE would consider funding this pilot study.

36. DHa commented that the study would complement drainage impact assessment. DW explained that LIDAR data will be used to produce flood maps but as yet this data has not been developed into a tool.

37. AW asked about the hydrometric data to be used in the study. DW explained that the study will only look at the topography of land and analyse where the water might flow to. He added that this is simply mapping of potential flow. He further explained that this technique has been developed in Australia to model water migration and has been successfully used in the Birmingham area. He explained that the tool does not go as far as to differentiate between permeable and impermeable surface but it does consider features such as roads and walls.

38. DW added that SPP7 calls for this type of survey to be carried out for new developments but the tools are not there at the moment.

39. PB asked who has responsibility for overland flooding. AB explained that it is usually the land owner. AB suggested that we find out more about what is happening in England and from there consider how this tool might be developed in Scotland.

Action point 3: SE/DW to find out what studies are being carried out in England and how we might learn from them.

Agenda Item 9: Update on taking forward scoping study into interface design standards - David Wilson to lead.

40. DW to report back to Secretariat with comments at a later date.

Action point 4: DW to report back on the scoping study into interface design standards at the next meeting.

Agenda item 10: AOB

41. CA and DHo informed members that they have been invited to speak at the SEPA conference this autumn.

Agenda item 11: Date of next meeting

42. The next meeting was provisionally set for 26 August.

Action point 5: Secretariat to confirm date of the next meeting.

**NTAG Secretariat
August 2004**