

## Highland Local/Area Advisory Group Minutes of meeting on 21/06/2017 Council Chamber, The Highland Council, Dingwall

### Attendees

Jenny Davies	SEPA, River Basin Management (Chair)
Iris Krammer	SEPA, Flood Risk Management (Minutes)
Steve McFarland	SEPA, Flood Risk Management
Matt Smith	The Highland Council
Duncan Sharp	The Highland Council
Frances Boyton	Moray Firth Partnership
Mary Gibson	Scottish Natural Heritage
Keith Inglis	Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd
Alison Searl	RSPB
Keith Williams	Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust

### Apologies

Simon McKelvey	Cromarty Fisheries Trust
Ranald Robertson	HITRANS
Martin Mackinnon	Forestry Commission Scotland
Tim Stott	The Highland Council
James Cusiter	Cromarty Firth Port Authority
Paul Hendy	Scottish Flood Forum
Ian Wilson	NFUS
Graham Grant	CFPA
Sinclair Browne	Port of Inverness
Jeff Collins	HIAL
Vicky Junik	Moray Firth Partnership

### 1. Welcome, introductions and apologies (Jenny)

Jenny welcomed the group and conveyed apologies as listed above.  
Everyone introduced themselves around the table.

### 2. Minutes and actions from previous meeting (Jenny)

The group approved the minutes of the previous meeting.

### 3. Flood Risk Management action implementation update (Matt)

Matt updated the group on the ongoing actions within The Highland Council's area.

Dingwall: Environmental stakeholder workshop was held. Public exhibition planned for July. It is recognised that extensive discussions with land owners will be required. Some concern around Peffery river classification due to modifications within Dingwall. Jenny is following up to see if this section can be defined as heavily modified water body.

Matt to share River Enrick NFM information with Jenny to consider for joint projects (**Action 8.1**).

#### 4. Updates from group members

Keith Inglis updated the group on HIAL's actions across the country. Some of these are not detailed in the Flood Risk Management Strategies. HIAL is lobbying Scottish Government for additional funding to reduce flood risk.

- *Benbecula airport*: phase 3 ongoing 450m gabion baskets to prevent erosion. Phase 4 is programmed for 2019. Major storms can move several metres of dunes.
- *Inverness airport*: Ongoing dialogue between HIAL, SEPA and SNH about improving surface water drainage, including culvert underneath runway. A desktop feasibility study to deal with the culvert has been completed. The preferred option is to realign the burn to the north of the airport. Keith to share options appraisal with Jenny (**Action 8.2**), pending internal approval. Jenny assured Keith that SEPA has secure facilities for commercially sensitive data.

There are also flooding concerns due to developments of the Inverness airport business park. This is supported by a flood impact assessment, which informed the desktop study of the runway assessment. HIAL is concerned about possible increases to runoff in the burn under the airfield. The Highland Council would expect that the 200yr surface water flood is contained within the site. Matt, Jenny and Keith agreed to follow up on this (**Action 8.3**), by looking at planning advice provided to the airport business park.

- *Stornoway*: There is concern around coastal erosion to the runway, which was confirmed by modelling. A programme of works 2021-2023 with several phases has been developed to protect the runway. Some topographic surveys were done, but no site investigation yet.
- *Islay airport*: flood study was commissioned to assess flood risk to the terminal building from the local burn.

Keith Williams updated the group on a project in the Water of Glen Kelvey, which aims to remove a fish barrier. They are currently collecting information to support the WEF funding application. This could open up around 5km of habitat and good spawning areas.

Mary Gibson updated the group on the Peatland Action Plan. £8 million was being made available to restore peatlands. This can have positive benefits to natural flood management, habitat creation, etc. Further information is available here: <http://www.snh.gov.uk/climate-change/taking-action/carbon-management/peatland-action/information-for-applicants/> Keith W agreed that peatland restoration is a good idea, having done improvements in the past as part of the Pearls in Peril project. Diane Banff is encouraging fisheries trusts to develop projects and apply for funding.

Mary also highlighted the existence of deer management groups and plans and there may be some scope to link in with flood risk or river basin management. Woodland is one of the objectives to deliver against. Jenny

confirmed that in future SEPA may include riparian woodland in the classification.

Mary shared that Wester Ross was granted UNESCO Biosphere status to recognise the importance of natural heritage and its sustainable management. There is a 10yr development plan under development, which could include various projects and ideas. However, no dedicated funding is currently available. More information here:

<https://www.westerrossbiosphere.com/>

## 5. SEPA flood risk management update (Steve)

### 2<sup>nd</sup> National Flood Risk Assessment (NFRA2)

SEPA is preparing the 2<sup>nd</sup> NFRA, which will support the next Flood Risk Management Strategies and Local Flood Risk Management Plans. The methodology has been updated, with communities being at the centre of the assessment. Several of the input data sets have been updated – significantly the properties data now includes many more properties and categories. The methodology is currently undergoing peer review. There will also be a greater emphasis on climate change and risk to life / wellbeing. RPS has been awarded a contract to write model scripts to run the NFRA.

The NFRA outputs will also underpin the designation of Potentially Vulnerable Areas (PVAs). Therefore it is very important that the outputs are scrutinised. SEPA will engage with local authorities December 2017 – March 2018 and with the public in spring 2018 on the NFRA outputs and draft Potentially Vulnerable Areas. This will most likely be through an online portal. The NFRA will be published in December 2018.

### SEPA's flood risk and hazard maps

SEPA strives to update the flood risk and hazard maps annually with new information (for example from studies or other improvements). However, the December 2016 update has been delayed due to issues with packaging the data. Therefore, the currently available data should still be used.

Improvements to the coastal flood maps are planned to coincide with coastal flood warning improvements. In addition, the coastal flood boundaries for Mainland UK and the Islands dataset and the offshore wind and wave datasets are being updated.

### National Coastal Change Assessment (NCCA)

The NCCA looks at past erosion/accretion rates to project future rates of change on Scotland's soft coasts. The NCCA can be used to inform flood risk management and planning advice. A series of regional reports will be available. This will be officially launched in July. Information is available on

[www.dynamiccoast.com](http://www.dynamiccoast.com)

### Artificial structure and natural features

SEPA established a steering group to start developing the maps of artificial and natural features providing flood risk management. Currently an engagement plan is being produced.

### Land use planning

SEPA has engaged with land use planners within SEPA and local authorities to improve flood risk management through land use planning. Further work will be taken forward to improve the linkages between the two fields.

#### Flood study check-list

Steve reminded the local authorities that version 2 of the flood study check list is now available in addition to the [flood modelling guidance](#) to support local authorities' flood studies and integration of study outputs with SEPA's flood maps.

## **6. River Basin Management update (Jenny)**

Details in a presentation on the following web page;  
<https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/river-basin-management-planning/who-is-involved-with-rbmp/area-advisory-groups/north-highland/>

Within the highland area, barriers to fish migration is the biggest issue. A recent workshop with responsible authorities from across Highland covered their role regarding barriers to fish migration that are associated with infrastructure such as bridge apromns and road culverts. Further details are available on the following web page;  
<https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/river-basin-management-planning/who-is-involved-with-rbmp/area-advisory-groups/north-highland/>

New regulations that require responsible authorities to remove asset barriers. Jenny to share the regulations with Keith (**Action 8.4**).

SEPA is working with Food Standards Scotland to improve understanding of the downgrades for over 50 Shellfish Water Protected Areas. FSS collect data but they base their assessments on worst case scenarios to protect human health. For SEPA this information is difficult to use for proportionate regulation thus work is ongoing to resolve assessment of shellfish waters. New DNA monitoring can help pinpoint the sources of E-coli, which are often the cause of failing shellfish waters.

## **7. Any other business**

Steve highlighted that Oxford Martin published an NFM re-statement. This provides a summary of our current scientific knowledge of natural flood management. The paper is available here:  
[http://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/downloads/academic/Oxford\\_Martin\\_Restatement4\\_Natural\\_Flood\\_Management.pdf](http://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/downloads/academic/Oxford_Martin_Restatement4_Natural_Flood_Management.pdf)

**Actions arising from the Local Advisory Group meeting**

<b>Action Number</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Complete by</b>	<b>Update</b>
<b>8.1</b>	Share Enrick NFM info with Jenny	Matt	28/07/2017	
<b>8.2</b>	Share feasibility study and options appraisal on culvert under runway with Jenny.	Keith I.	28/07/2017	
<b>8.3</b>	Follow up on airport business park development and possible impacts on runoff into culvert underneath airport.	Matt, Jenny and Keith	28/07/2017	
<b>8.4</b>	Share new barrier regulations with Keith W.	Jenny	28/07/2017	