

North East and Highland Local/Area Advisory Group Minutes of meeting on 16/05/2019

Location: Cairngorms National Park Authority, 14 The Square, Grantown on Spey, PH26 3HG

Attendees		Apologies	
Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
Roy Richardson (Chair)	SEPA RBMP	Ian Francis	RSPB
Iris Krammer (minutes)	SEPA FRMP	Gavin Penman	Aberdeenshire Council
Lee Watson	Aberdeenshire Council	Ally Maciver	Aberdeen Harbour
Will Burnish	Moray Council	Tim Stott	The Highland Council
Claire Royce	Aberdeen City Council	Graham Grant	Cromarty Firth Port Authority
Duncan Sharp	The Highland Council	James Cusiter	Cromarty Firth Port Authority (left)
Duncan Ferguson	Spey Foundation	Sinclair Browne	Port of Inverness
Penny Lawson	Spey Catchment Management Partnership	Ranald Robertson	HITRANS
Zoe Griffin	SEPA, Planning	Robert Dey	
Karen Cunningham	RSPB	Carla McNeill (Ward)	SEPA, RBMP
Karin Bloodworth	SEPA, Flood Advisor	Ben Bickle	Scottish Water
Susan Haslam	SEPA, Planning	Lyndsey Close	Scottish Water
Agata Baranska	Forestry Commission Scotland	Steve McFarland	SEPA FRMP
Tim Gordon-Roberts	Forestry Commission Scotland	Martin Mackinnon	Forestry Commission Scotland
Marcus Walters	Deveron Fisheries Trust	Bob Laughton	Findhorn, Nairn and Lossie Fisheries Trust
Gus Jones	Scottish Environment Link	Gavin Clark	SNH
Corrina Mertens	Scottish Natural Heritage	Andy McDonald	SEPA, Resilience
Julie Bhatti	HIAL	Mark Wilkinson	James Hutton Institute
Ian Hay	East Grampian Coastal Partnership	Steve Addy	James Hutton Institute
Sally Mackenzie	Cairngorms National Park Authority	Paul Hendy	Scottish Flood Forum
Katherine Donnachie	Cairngorms National Park Authority	Marina Piper	Dee Catchment Partnership
Andrew Goldie	Port of Cromarty Firth	Mary Gibson	Scottish Natural Heritage
Jenny Davies	SEPA RBMP	Richie Miller	Deveron Fisheries Trust
Dan Harris	Cairngorms National Park Authority	Maureen Corley	Aberdeenshire Council
Katie Crerar	Cairngorms National Park Authority	Keith Inglis	HIAL
		Vicky Junik	Moray Firth Partnership

Welcome and Introductions

Roy welcomed everyone to the meeting. Thank you to Cairngorms National Park Authority for providing the meeting room, tea, coffee and biscuits and for facilitating the SUDS site visit. Thank you to the Spey Catchment Initiative and Spey Foundation for facilitating the Allt Lorgy site visit.

Round-the-table introductions were made.

Minutes and actions of the previous meetings

The North East and Highland meeting minutes were accepted without comments. All action updates are included in the previous minutes and there was nothing outstanding.

Highlights of ongoing flood risk management actions

The Highland Council (Duncan Sharp)

- Peffery: Flood study identified preferred option for Dingwall and Blairninich. Stakeholder engagement started.
- Thurso and Golspie: public exhibition with an introduction to the short-listed options
- Kingussie: Flood modelling out to tender
- Mill Burn (Inverness): 1D/2D modelling is being undertaken by a consultant
- South Kessock: being progressed by The Highland Council's Housing team
- Smithton and Culloden: flood scheme under construction expected to be completed later this year.
- Caol: Awaiting the Reporter's recommendation following a public hearing. 1 objection. Drumnadrochit: sorting out some issues with SEPA.

Moray Council (Will Burnish)

- Portgordon and Lossie: Options to go to committee in June, but unlikely to be funded before 2028/29. Proposal includes an upgrade to the sea wall at Lossie.
- Buckie is next on the list for investigations
- Looking to review the model on an existing flood scheme with new data. The scheme has not been decided yet, but may be Rothes.
- Community engagement is planned

Aberdeen City Council (Claire Royce)

- SCORE project around Technology and data to create a digital city. Currently trialling an app in Peterculter that allows access to gauges. This will be rolled out across the city. Gauges are currently being calibrated. Citizen science approach with residents recording information and creating the data source.
- BEGIN project to promote BlueGreen infrastructure. The bund at Maidencraig is finished for flood storage with a look to improve core paths and wetlands. A WEF

project is supporting improvements to the flood storage, morphology and ecology on the Den Burn between Stronsay and Maidencraig.

- Rain garden proposal at Fernielea School
- Action plan for all Surface Water Management Plans due by end of 2019

Scottish Water (Iris Krammer as Scottish Water sent apologies)

- Scottish Water's sewer assessments largely on track for delivery within time-scales set out in Local Flood Risk Management Plan

SEPA (Iris Krammer)

- Launch of the North East coastal flood warning scheme last autumn
- Re-calibration of the Findhorn and Lossie flood warning schemes with public sessions on 21st May in Elgin and 22nd May in Findhorn
- Surface water mapping delayed as scope was changed to what we originally committed to.
- River updates are small-scale and largely going to plan. Wick still needs to go for local authority review.
- Coastal mapping improvements linked to our coastal flood forecasting scheme for North-East Scotland. Intention is to finish these updates this calendar year.

Aberdeenshire (Lee Watson)

- Huntly scheme complete, but not yet tested in a severe weather situation
- Stonehaven Carron flood scheme construction started in January 2019
 - £16 million over two years by McLaughlin and Harvey
- Ballater study is at preferred option stage. Current proposals include hard defences along the golf course and caravan park.
- Ellon: The January 2016 flood was a 1 in 450 year flood, so very rare and therefore few opportunities to protect to this standard. Most houses are above the 1 in 200 year flood, which is normally planned to.
- Inverurie and Inch: Stakeholder engagement planned for 16th May
- Stonehaven coastal study starting to look at various options.
- Consultation with communities throughout the studies is key.

Update from group members

Spey Catchment Initiative (Penny Lawson)

- Riparian woodland expansion from Boat of Garten to Aviemore with funding from Cairngorms National Park Authority and the estate for fencing and free trees from the Woodland Trust along 4.5km of river bank. This created a 7km habitat corridor with benefits including NFM and a reduction in diffuse pollution.
- Three fish barriers were addressed in the Tomintoul and Glenlivet area. This included culvert re-design and timber pre-weirs at bridges.
- Access-point re-design to the River Spey in Aviemore from landfill tax funding. This will include willow spiralling and timber revetments.

- A project is looking for funding from the Biodiversity Challenge Fund to naturalise 150m of the Slugain Burn – a tributary of the Dulnain. The trib had been straightened and dredged historically and is now perched and poor habitat.
- Woody debris project on the the Calder near Newtonmore seeking wider catchment improvements.

Spey Foundation (Duncan Ferguson)

- Edinburgh university has been involved with a drone project, monitoring river temperature and morphology to a depth of 1m.
- Is “woody debris” a good name, or should we start referring to other names. Debris implies the river needs to be cleared of it.

Deveron Fisheries Trust (Marcus Walters)

- Project on the Crooksmill Burn near Keith under development. There is a CBEC report. A lot of straightened channels that are exacerbating flood risk. Looking for funding ideas.

Scottish Forestry (Time Gordon-Roberts and Agata Baranska)

- Scottish Forestry Commission is now to separate, devolved organisations:
 - Scottish Forestry, which deals with regulations and grants
 - Forestry and Land Scotland: manages the existing estate
- There are forestry funding opportunities – details in the funding discussion below!

Funding discussion (all)

- If sites are near land fill sites, civic amenity or waste transfer stations they may be eligible for [landfill communities funding](#)
- SSE has [local funds](#) for communities near wind farms as well as a [sustainable development fund](#)
- Large infrastructure projects, such as wind farms, have community funds – but projects may need to go through the local community council to apply for funding.
- Wind farm funding was used for projects around Grantown-on-Spey
- [Forestry Scotland](#) has funding for trees through their “Woodland for Waters” fund. There are minimum sizes, so it’s a “woodland”. The area has to be greater than ¼ hectare in area and more than 15m wide stem to stem. 80-90% of standard cost to plant a hectare is provided, plus protection and +5 years of maintenance costs. Designated sites are eligible for 100% costs. Woodland officers provide free advice prior to applying.
- The [Woodland Trust](#) provides free trees – fencing still has to be funded separately.

East Grampian Coastal Partnership (Ian Hay)

- There is a plastics project ongoing. Over four tonnes of plastic were removed from 1km of beach. This included 49 large oil filters and 557 blue gloves.

- The [Scrapbook project](#) uses volunteers to take regular aerial photographs of Scotland's coastline to identify areas in need of beach cleans. The images are available free of charge and can be used for other purposes. Litter-free images are available on request.
- There is also a project around raising awareness of what goes down the kitchen sink and that it can end up on the beach. The group highlighted links to Scottish Water.
- The beach near Inverdee House was one of the worst beaches in the area until a small group of volunteers started cleaning it every Thursday.
- "[Have you got bottle](#)" campaign to support bottle deposit return scheme.
- A warning system for beach cleans would be good, to ensure volunteers don't get in touch with contaminated beaches. Note that SEPA runs the [bathing water quality predictions](#) in June, July and August!

Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd (Julie Bhatti)

- Staff can use a volunteer day each year. This could be used for beach cleans in conjunction with the Scrapbook project data. Vicky and Julie to link up on this (**Action 10.1**).
- Project to update infrastructure to ease environmental pressures is underway. This includes diverting the discharges and looking at the options for morphological improvements.
- Project to recycle aircraft de-icer is at feasibility stage. It could be used as feedstock in anaerobic digestion.

Spey Catchment (Duncan Ferguson)

Duncan provided an overview of the changes he has observed in the Spey catchment on his 29th work anniversary. Some facts from his talk:

- The Spey catchment is around 3000km² in size with several thousand kilometres of river.
- "Badenoch" means flooded land. Much of the flood plain is however disconnected by embankments that have not been accounted for in the SEPA classification. (It's expected SEPA's improved data will be accounted for in classification soon).
- 49% of water in the Spey is extracted before it reaches Kingussie
- Flood management and drought management need to be linked more closely. Drought plans are currently done by council, not by catchment. A multiple agency approach will be required at a catchment scale. 2018 was the worst drought since 1976 and we're expecting another dry year.
- Fishing is worth £16 million in the Spey catchment.
- Garmouth changes constantly.
- The Spey Catchment Initiative is a multi-agency approach and a delivery mechanism. This is how funding can be secured, for example.
- We need to realise more opportunities for natural flood management, particularly during large infrastructure projects.

- There is little suitable habitat for beavers in the Spey catchment due to a lack of food source. Thought they would impact the aspen woodland. They are however likely to migrate into the Spey in coming years.

Potential for broadleaf and conifer trees (Sally Mackenzie)

Cairngorms National Park Authority ran a project with the James Hutton Institute identifying areas that are suitable for tree planting and achieving multiple benefits (habitat creation, increase in forests, natural flood management, etc). More detail on modelling is available on request. Used SEPA's natural flood management maps and a previous project on capercaillie habitat to identify areas to reduce run-off of water and nutrients and to improve water quality. The result can be added as a layer to Google Earth.

Plan is to create a similar model for peat restoration and floodplain storage.

Ground trothing is the next stage to see if and where they can do some planting.

Action 10.2 for Cairngorms National Park and The Highland Council to link up on the Gynack study to see if information can be shared.

Want to link up with estates and Forestry Scotland and identify funding sources.

It was highlighted that there could be adverse impacts on flows, particularly during droughts. Lessons could be learnt for other areas.

SEPA's River Basin Management and Flood Risk Management update (Jenny Davies and Iris Krammer)

See Appendix 1 for the timeline for the creation of the next River Basin Management Plans and Flood Risk Management Strategies.

- There will be a public consultation on both commencing 22nd December 2020.
- [Water classification Hub](#) is updated every autumn with the latest classification data.
- RBMP3 will be published in December 2021.
- Plans and strategies will be published 22nd December 2021
- Local authorities will publish their final report (on how flood actions have been implemented) and their Local Flood Risk management Plans by June 2022.

One Planet Prosperity is SEPA's new regulatory strategy to ensure compliance (which is non-negotiable) and encourage the use of fewer resources. We need to think about more circular objectives. For example water provides a service (e.g. drinking water), is a carrier (e.g. plastic, soils, nutrients) and provides energy (e.g. hydropower, thermal energy from sewers). For example, in Scotland we could get all our energy from sewer heat exchange! We will need to change the way we think and deliver projects as many of these opportunities may not fall within our current way of working..

- Exercise: Fly a drone across a catchment and identify opportunities to provide more resilient services.
- Example: Upper Nairn was perched above the flood plain. With £300,000 5km of river were restored, multiple benefits and excellent value for money.

Site visits

The group visited a SUDS site in Grantown-on-Spey and saw lamprays and an otter bridge. We discussed SUDS with the developer as well as Scottish Water's stipulations for access tracks. The presence of spawning lamprey upstream of the development and evidence of otters demonstrated the success of careful planning process that involved multiple partner agencies.

After lunch at the Pagoda the group car pooled to the Allt Lorgy, where Duncan Ferguson and Penny Lawson showed the group the UK's first woody debris placed to help restore the river. The large woody debris provided suggestions to the river, but the river has space to move as required. Local school kids have been involved over a number of years to plant trees on the flood plain and remove plastic guards (against voles). This site provides an excellent example of low cost rural morphological improvements. Over the 600m stretch restored they have gained nearly 40 m of new habitat retaining water in the catchment and creating more diversity in the habitat for ecology.

Actions arising from the Local Advisory Group meeting

Action Number	Action	Owner	Complete by	Update
8.1	Share RSPB Insh Marshes study once available	Karen and Penny	31/12/2017	Jan 2019: Summary report not yet available. May 2018: Karen and Penny to follow up.
10.1	Link up on beach clean opportunities between Moray Firth Partnership and HIAL.	Julie Bhatti and Vicki Junik	28/06/2019	
10.2	Link up on Gynack flood study and Cairngorms tree planting potential mapping	Duncan Sharp and Sally Mackenzie	28/06/2019	

Appendix 1: Timeline for creation of the River Basin Management Plans and Flood Risk Management Strategies

