

**Comments & Points Raised at Meeting**  
**Town Hall Meeting**  
**Flooding Bill Consultation**

Location: Easterbrook Hall  
The Crichton  
Bankend Road  
Dumfries  
Dumfries & Galloway  
DG1 4TA

Date/Time: 18:30 – 20:00  
09 May 2008

**PANEL MEMBERS**

Michael Russell	Minister for Environment
Bill Barker	Dumfries & Galloway Council
Jim Conlin	Scottish Water
Chris Miles	Scottish Natural Heritage
David Faichney	SEPA
Stan Irvine	Scottish Government
Gordon Young	Scottish Government (Minutes)

**SYNOPSIS OF COMMENTS RAISED**

- During the last floods there was severe lack of sandbags. Should it not be a statutory duty for the LA to provide sandbags and/or demountable barriers.
- We have no Flood Prevention for the River Nith. There have been 80 events since 1990. These caused lost revenue, lost investments and closures of the hospital. Over the years there has been no significant help from the Council.
- The River Nith floods because gravel has built up on the river bed. LA, SEPA and SNH cannot make their minds up and blame each other. Bill needs to specify who decides and who is responsible in a situation like this.
- Gravel removal should be done in a balanced way. The effects elsewhere should be examined. If there needs to be something done upstream, who will make these decisions in future?
- If land is to be used for inundation, who will compensate land owner, and where will this funding come from? Bill needs to make this clear.
- We need a whole catchment wide response. There should be more capacity for water to flood onto land with poor agricultural purpose.

- There should be a better and more informed warning system in place. Bill should not concentrate solely on soft measures. Hard measures will also be necessary.
- Demountable barriers are effective (they have been in Carlisle). They should form part of D&Gs strategy. There is no funding for them. These should form part of Flood Prevention strategy in new Bill.
- Consultation would appear to exclude pluvial and sewer flooding. Cannot address Flood Risk Management without addressing these issues.
- Consultation would appear to embody the same existing problems. There is no accountability and no guaranteed outcomes. Would appear that grey areas will still exist, with continued confusion. A clearly marked line of responsibility for Flood Risk Management needs to be outlined in the Bill.
- Funding streams are not defined in the Consultation, and this should not be left as a grey area. Grey areas would appear to suit the involved bodies.
- How will the bill deal with communities which will flood but are deemed to be “not sufficiently at risk?” How will this be defined?
- Bill doesn’t address pluvial flooding, and it never will if phrased in the same language as Consultation.
- There must be checks and balances made on funding/expenditure, otherwise nothing will get done. Who will check this?
- Bill doesn’t make clear how the Competent Authority will be funded, and who will oversee it. This is necessary for the system to work.
- The Bill needs more “teeth” to enforce things. Not enough to rely on goodwill and assume competence.
- Bill needs to determine how “cross-border” issues will be dealt with.
- River Nith must be dredged. There are sandstone blocks in river, and the islands are growing.
- Authorities should look to older people to inform them of how the river was – say 60 years ago.
- The Bill should be about gathering all relevant experience and making the relevant bodies work together in unison.
- Bill should be about finding ways of stopping the water “up in the hills.” Identify places to build dams/reservoirs. Material could be used from dredging river.

- In January 1962, there was a severe flood, and a loch was formed at Heathhall/Kirkton. This is the type of measures that should be proposed in new Bill. To allow storage of water up stream in times of excess water levels.
- The Consultation is not clear about how the Bill will affect riparian owners. Previously the obligation for maintenance ( of banking, river bed, erosion etc ) was removed from the Government/Local Authority, and the onus was put onto the riparian owner. CAR legislation makes the whole issue a nightmare.
- We need clearly defined roles and obligations for these issues.
- In a National plan, or a catchment plan, would it not be possible that smaller Authorities like Dumfries & Galloway would lose influence? How will the bill address giving an equal say and influence to the smaller Authorities?
- The term “taken over” when used in the context of returning arable land to wetland is “objectionable.” The Bill should not assume the right to step over landowners. The Bill must protect their rights. There must be a realistic reward/compensation system.
- The Bill needs to ensure that there is a Flood “Tsar” to oversee the relevant bodies because of conflicting response.
- River bed gravel is a valuable renewable. The Bill should empower the Local Authorities to “farm” gravel beds, with automatic license from SEPA.
- Are we sure that we can have confidence in new FRMPs. Perhaps new soft measures will be inadequate or will not work, while our present hard measures are inadequate.
- The Bill must incorporate bank erosion, as this very often leads to flooding.
- The Bill must encourage relocation from flood plains, and encourage building away from areas of flood risk.
- The Bill must consider the maintenance of culverts – a grey area at present. Who has the duty? Who pays? Who carries out the work?
- New development must use permeable surfaces and be future proof.
- The Bill should address relaxation of Planning regarding listed buildings.
- The Bill must fund reforestation. This is the key to stopping pluvial flooding.
- The Bill should perhaps understand that we have to learn to live with flooding.