

Ballater Community Council – Public Meeting

SEPA statement:

We regret that we are unable to attend the meeting tonight. We would have liked to have the opportunity to answer any questions on SEPA's work, that might have been helpful to the discussions.

SEPA's role in the process of developing the flood scheme if funding is approved:

If funding is approved for the scheme, there will be a detailed design phase, and a construction phase. Both phases have been included in SEPA's flood risk management plans for the next 6 years. During the design phase, there will be formal consultation with all stakeholders, of which SEPA is one. This is the stage we are most involved in, and we provide advice on all matters within SEPA's remit which generally covers issues of environmental protection and changes in flood risk. We look closely at the supporting documents for the scheme design, with particular attention given to the Environmental Impact Assessment and all the flood risk assessment and modelling which has been done. SEPA's input on all relevant issues will be coordinated by our planning service unit.

Regarding the flood modelling:

We are looking for evidence of a robust assessment which makes use of all the best data available at the time of the work, to ensure that the flooding is fully understood. The baseline (current situation, without the scheme) modelling should reflect the observations of what has happened in the past, and the 'with-scheme' modelling should fully consider the effects of the proposed scheme, both in the area it is intended to benefit and in surrounding areas where risk may change as a result of the scheme.

Regarding environmental protection:

SEPA is required to issue Controlled Activities Regulation authorisations to cover any relevant river engineering activities, and to assess the impact the scheme may have on the environment. SEPA's assessment of the project will include issues on geomorphology, ecology, water quality and hydrology. Mitigation measures may be included as part of the scheme design to manage the risk of harm, either through the construction phase or the operational phase.

Beyond this formal consultation with SEPA on the detailed design of the scheme, SEPA works with Aberdeenshire Council on a more regular basis as part of the local flood risk management partnership, which we use to ensure that all action on flooding is coordinated across the North East. Other authorities are part of that too, including other Councils and Scottish Water. Through the partnership we will ensure that any developments with the scheme are linked with other changes that might then be needed. This could include new arrangements for the flood warning service, that might be needed during the construction or operational phases.