



## **Ballater & Crathie Community Council**

Alan Wood

18 April 2024

Director Environment and Infrastructure

Aberdeenshire Council

cc. Ward 15 Councillors, Leader of Aberdeenshire Council, Chair of Infrastructure Services Committee, AbCo Flood Team, Invercauld, Balmoral and Glenmuick Estates, CNPA, SEPA Director of Evidence and Flooding, Dee Fisheries Board, Ballater Golf Club, Ballater (RD) Ltd, Ballater Commercial Enterprise Ltd, Andrew Bowie MP, Alexander Burnett MSP

Dear Mr Wood

We wrote to you in January 2023 informing you of the decision of the Community Council (BCCC) decision to oppose the Option 3a Flood Defence Scheme submitted by Aberdeenshire Council (AbCo) for Scottish Government funding in December 2019.

BCCC's responsibility is to reflect the views of the community. As additional information has been made available, through the local Eagle magazine, websites and other channels, the community has become increasingly better informed. The decision of BCCC reflects the overwhelming view of the community expressed in public meetings both on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2022 and on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023. It is unfortunate that AbCo did not feel able to attend the latter public meeting.

On 29<sup>th</sup> June 2023, BCCC Flooding Issues Group (FIG) provided a draft briefing document on the reasons supporting BCCC's opposition to Option 3A to elected members for them to discuss with officers. A current updated version is available on our website at [ff0841\\_5fd31835dd56457c8b9c34bcba733fc1.pdf \(ballaterandcrathiecommunitycouncil.com\)](https://www.ballaterandcrathiecommunitycouncil.com/files/ff0841_5fd31835dd56457c8b9c34bcba733fc1.pdf)

We also provided the draft to Ballater Golf Club and Ballater Commercial Enterprise Ltd as relevant affected companies. FIG will now be publishing a summary of that paper in the next edition of our local Eagle magazine. We would particularly draw your attention to the statement:

Scottish Government (SG) guidance to SEPA on flood option appraisal states; "A sustainable solution will take full account of economic, social and environmental impacts,

and protect and enhance our natural and built environment for ourselves and for future generations.” The option selection process for 3A did not include a full economic, social & environmental (ESE) impact assessment. AbCo have stated that this would take place in the next phase, however, as the fixed defence for 3A passes through the Caravan Park and the Golf Course it is clear that the economic impact would be significant even before the height and nature of defences closer to the village are considered. FIG’s preliminary ‘middle’ estimate suggests an economic downside (Net Present Value) for 3A of approximately £40m. FIG therefore conclude that even before social and environmental considerations are taken into account, Option 3A proposal is not an economically ‘sustainable solution’.

- Are there any social, environmental and economic analysis documents in relation to 3A? Could you share these?
- Our understanding is that AbCo have not yet carried out any post economic impact analysis of 3A. Please confirm that this is correct?
- As we have already discussed the legislation seems to suggest that the post economic impact of 3A should have been assessed prior to the submission - what is AbCo position on this?
- Would AbCo plan to carry out any post economic analysis prior to the flood risk management plan review in 2025?
- If the AbCo post economic analysis and updated cost benefit confirms that 3A is not viable what would be AbCo’s next steps re Ballater flood defences?

It would be helpful for the community if AbCo could respond and make any representations in relation to this or any other part of that paper, before the next Eagle copy date on 1 May 2024.

FIG continues to work in accordance with the workstream document approved by BCCC from time to time. A copy of the current version is also available on our website at [Flooding Issues Group | Community Council Ballater | Ballaterandcrathiecommunitycouncil](#).

Whilst it is accepted that there are no short-term plans that will protect from another Storm Frank, BCCC and FIG will continue to work on a range of flood issues to mitigate flood risk for Ballater as set out in the agreed workstreams, principally a combination of low-level local mitigation measures and catchment level solutions under the leadership of the Cairngorms National Park Authority. We are glad that AbCo are taking part together with SEPA and others in the CNPA’s initiative.

Ballater (RD) Ltd are now contracting with cbec eco-engineering UK Ltd (cbec) for them to provide a range of alternate flooding mitigation options and we anticipate consulting on these in the late Summer or early Autumn of 2024. BCCC and FIG hope to continue to work with AbCo and its Flood Team particularly in relation to cbec’s proposals and as to what measures in relation to higher frequency, lower level events are proportionate and sensible.

We continue to be happy to meet at any time to discuss all and any issues regarding flooding.

Yours

Richard Frimston

Chair of FIG

Secretary of BCCC