

Summary of Flood Report Discussion at MAC on 5th November.

Council officers presented Flood Report. This was followed by a response from Jim Hunter (Ballater Golf Club) and Michael Coletta, Jim Anderson & Fiona Presslie (BCCC). All the responses expressed the conflict between the desire to protect life and limb, and the beauty, amenities and economic viability of Ballater, whilst the community felt that it had not been consulted but merely presented with a scheme which could severely damage the village as a fait accompli.

The members of MAC then held a discussion to agree commentary to be put forward to the Infrastructure Service Committee (ISC). Much of the discussion was around clarification of how much the design could change should funding be received and the dilemma of undertaking further work and missing this round of funding. It was stressed that the economic benefits of the scheme were marginal and that it might well not get priority and therefore might not go ahead.

The request to clarify how much the design could change was asked by at least three of the members on more than one occasion. Council Officers did not give a straight answer. At one stage it was indicated that it would be only a matter of a few metres and that the preferred option is the only viable solution. This was later contradicted, and the preferred option described as a viability study requiring considerably more work and consultation. A request was made for definitive clarification ahead of the ISC.

There was a general feeling that it would be better to submit funding application based on current preferred option and if a materially different scheme surfaced the application could be pulled.

There was unanimous support that Ballater needs defences and that the community, golf club, caravan park should be continued to be consulted.

When asked whether any steps were being taken to reduce flooding risks prior to any scheme being completed in ten years' time, response was that this was a matter for individual householders themselves.

In general there was support for the application to be put forward with caveats, whilst one member thought it better to consult properly and apply in the next round rather than risk ending up with the wrong scheme and others thought that the process would produce a result that was better than risking loss of life if another flood occurred in the intervening period. As a conclusion the councillors were asked to state their position; four councillors supported the submission as it stands, one against it entirely and four who would be prepared to support it with the guarantee of caveats.