19th September 2019

Ballater Flood Response Group

Meeting Notes

There was approximately 100 people present [a rough count]

1. Concerns that there has not been a real consultation. There was a late evening event in Stonehaven and a presentation in 2017 which informed the community what the council were doing but not asking for input from the community. There has been no engagement with individuals in the village who have engineering experience and who were present and observed events. **There is a strong feeling that the community has not been consulted [which is different to being informed].**

2. The council has not taken note of local observations, it has not considered if the suggestions for solutions have technical merit.

3. There was a shared view that the community does not have faith in the study, Q. where is the water going to disperse once it passes the bridge, will it flood back up towards the village?

4. Would/Should the council look at and assess the merits of an independent hydrological report done by residents?

5. A question from the audience, what's on the table, what's available now? Following a suggestion that there was an alternative option yet to be discussed.

6. The BFRG have rejected the council's proposals in their entirety [Tony Cox] and the council are sympathetic to the BFRG's position. This was later clarified that the BFRG had not rejected the council's proposals [Michael Coletta] that they would support the proposals but with caveats. Michael stated that the golf course and the caravan park must be protected.

7. The BFRG have proposed an alternative solution [based on an equivalence solution]. Tony Cox had spoken this morning with Cllr Peter Argyle [Chair of the Infrastructure Services Committee – ISC] and had indicated this alternative solution was supported by Cllr Argyle.

8. There are no drawings of the alternative solution available. Might possibly have a draft drawing by the end of October. The BFRG would like the councils Lidar data in order to model their alternative solution.

9. Why were Aberdeenshire Council able to repair the wall in Inverurie so soon after the event?

10. In terms of the economic case, has the council considered the socio-economic impact, i.e. the benefits for ensuring Ballater is protected versus the concern and unwillingness to invest longer term if it were not protected?

11. A show of hands for those who did not support the council's proposals – my estimate was that 75% were not supportive.

12. How can residents mold the proposals to suit their needs? How can they – at the drop in session – make the draft plan better? There is broad dissatisfaction that the drop-in session does not include a presentation.

13. What date is the Flood Response report coming to Marr Area Committee and can residents, the BCCC or BFRG or other groups request to speak?

14. Can the council submit a scheme by the end of the year [in order to secure finding] but improve/change that scheme after it has been submitted based on new information acquired? Is there past precedence for this happening?

15. It was stated [Tony Cox] that planning application for the scheme WILL be called in by the CNP. Is this a certainty?

Comments made by Cllr PG

I had requested of the Marr Area Manager that the format for the drop-in session be changed to include a presentation at 6pm, this was not supported.

I had advised that the sequencing of the review was to hold the public engagement session, for the report with the comments received to come to MAC in October [date to be confirmed] and that for the report to then pass to ISC on the 28th November and if subsequently approved by ISC, the preferred scheme will be submitted to the Scottish Government, by 31st December 2019 deadline.

It would be unlikely, in my opinion, that ISC [14 Councillors] would be able to vote for an alternative plan [£2million, £10milllion or other cost] that was not much more than an outline A4 proposal that was not accompanied by the technical work having been done to support that alternative solution.