

Ballater Flood Response Group
(A sub group of Ballater and Crathie Community Council)

Minutes of Meeting held on Friday 27 September 2019 in the BRD offices at 1830 hours

In attendance: John Bolton (JB), Bill Braid (BB), Michael Coletta (MC), Tony Cox (TC), Allan Harrison (AH), Jim Hunter (JH), Angus McNicol (AM), Colin Smith (CS)

Apologies: Jim Anderson (JA), Douglas Johnston (DJ), Alan Nicoll (AN), Fiona Presslie (FP)

Minutes: The minutes of the meeting held on 28 August 2019 were agreed as being an accurate record.

BFRG: MC felt it appropriate to remind everyone of why the BFRG had been established, which was to recommend the response that the B&CCC would be making to Aberdeenshire Council's consultants proposal, following an open dialogue with all stakeholder groups. It is the latter point (stakeholders) that has dictated the size of the group, which is an area of concern for TC.

The BFRG is a sub group of B&CCC and therefore all communications regarding the recommendations of the group with Aberdeenshire Council must be communicated via the B&CCC.

The deadlines for the submission were not communicated until the meeting in August, which has resulted in a shorter consultation period than was originally anticipated or is believed to be necessary.

Community Meeting:

FP has produced a record of the questions and points that were raised at the meeting and these will be shared with the group and forwarded to Aberdeenshire Council.

The key action points for the group following the meeting were:

1. Produce a map of the alternative route outlined by TC at the meeting by the end of October 2019 and share with the community.
2. Improve communication of the issues with the community.
3. Arrange a meeting in November for the community to be updated on the progress of the project.

TC confirmed that the technical work that is being performed on the alternative solution will take 4 – 6 weeks to finalise. This may result in the October deadline being missed.

Funding

Application: The deadline for the funding application is 31 December 2019, but prior to that point the Marr Area Committee (MAC) will need to approve the proposal and recommend it to Aberdeenshire Councils Infrastructure Sub Committee (ISC). The timings of these meetings at this point are unknown.

It was clear from the community meeting on 19 September that the majority of those present are rejecting the proposal to run the defences through the middle of the golf

course. In addition, there was clear cynicism and distrust of Aberdeenshire Council to respect any caveats that the BFRG may wish to impose on any conditional acceptance and therefore the group are being urged to reject the proposal as it stands. However, there is tentative support for routes that will skirt the inner or outer peripherals of the golf course.

AM suggested that while the proposal that has been presented to the community shows various defence routes, none of these are fixed because the design stage can only start once funding has been received and at that stage the proposed routes may be found to be unrealistic.

The group discussed the options available to the community and it is acknowledged that while there are a few alternative plans being proposed, none will be developed sufficiently to support any funding applications in 2020 due to the timings of the MAC and ISC meetings and the funding application deadline. Therefore, the options available are as follows:

1. Reject the proposal as it stands, miss the funding application and work to develop a detailed plan for submission in the 2026 funding round.
2. Develop alternative solutions and seek funding from other sources.
3. Develop legally binding caveats to the current proposal and support the current application.

The group agreed that options 2 and 3 should be pursued and that it could not recommend option 1 due to the high risk to the village and its occupants, without the authority of the community. It was therefore agreed that a survey should be developed and delivered to every property in the village to confirm the views of the community. This would need to be presented in a way that delivered the facts in as concise yet informative manner as possible and should be issued, received back and analysed prior to the community meeting in November.

As a side note, the stakeholders present were asked for their positions with regards to the current proposal and the responses were:

- Golf club – reject
- Caravan Park – reject any solution with defences running through the middle of the park
- BBA – will seek opinion of association members
- B&CCC – a vote would be required in committee meeting
- Lands & Estates – no direct impact therefore neutral
- Cornellan Square resident and member of Resilience Group – supportive of defences, but acknowledges the impact on the golf course and caravan park

TC informed the group that Aberdeenshire Council have been advised today by the UK government that any flood models should be adjusted to predict for stronger and more frequent flood events. Does this now mean that the consultants work is already out of date?

AOCB:

TC requested that any away day trips that DJ incurs from here on should result in a reimbursement of £200 being proposed. This would cover the expenses and expertise being provided. MC suggested that because the B&CCC has no funds available to

support this, that the BBA and BRD should be approached to see if they would finance such an arrangement. AM sought an indication of how much this may be, to avoid an open arrangement that may result in both organisations facing funding that they are unable to support. TC could not clarify this point.

TC raised the question of the storage of sand bags around the village as part of the resilience plan and JB suggested that the best solution for residents is to purchase "Floodsax" – pack of five which cost £21.34. It was agreed that this should form part of future resilience communications.

Actions: Map of alternative peripheral routes to be developed and produced for public consumption by end of October.

Action by: TC

Alternative plans to be pursued by technical team.

Action: TC/DJ

Survey to be developed and circulated.

Action by: JB

Timeline of events leading to the funding application deadline to be established.

Action by: MC

Caveats (which must be measurable) to be developed and provided to Golf Club who will seek support from their members to develop legal binding wording that can be included in the application.

Action by: MC/CS/JH

Next Meeting: The date of the next meeting was not agreed at the meeting. A proposal of 29 October 2019 at 1830 hours in the BRD offices is tabled.

Close: The Chair declared the meeting closed at 1956 hours, thanking all for their presence and ongoing support.