

THE MORAY COUNCIL

MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE FLOOD ALLEVIATION SUB COMMITTEE

6 AUGUST 2014

COUNCIL OFFICES, ELGIN

PRESENT

Councillors G. Alexander (Chair), J. Allan, L. Creswell, J. Divers, G. Leadbitter, A. McLean, M. Shand and A. Wright.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors P. Paul, R. Shepherd and A. Skene.

IN ATTENDANCE

The Consultancy Manager, the Project Manager (Elgin Flood Alleviation Scheme), the Project Manager (Forres (River Findhorn & Pilmuir) Flood Alleviation Scheme), the Technical Support Officer (Consultancy), the PPR & Communications Officer and Mr D Westmacott, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the meeting.

1. DECLARATION OF GROUP DECISIONS AND MEMBERS INTERESTS

In terms of Standing Order 20 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct, there were no declarations from group leaders or spokespersons in regard to any prior decisions taken on how Members will vote on any item on the agenda or any declarations of Members' interest in respect of any item on the agenda.

2. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The meeting noted the following written question submitted by Councillor Wright and the response thereto:

The River Findhorn and Pilmuir Flood Alleviation Scheme will bring great relief to many residents in Forres and to those who operate businesses in the Greshop industrial estate. However there is concern amongst landowners, tenant farmers, and some residents who feel that their property may now be more prone to flooding due to the fact that flood waters from the Findhorn can no longer escape to the sea via the Mosset burn. This, they say, could result in large areas of low-lying land being underwater for lengthy periods of time due to the fact that the water is trapped by the sea wall.

Can the flood team offer any solution to this perceived problem and should the scheme have included flap valves in the sea wall?

RESPONSE

The Forres (River Findhorn & Pilmuir) Flood Alleviation Scheme Flood Risk Assessment formed part of the planning application. It shows that the land in question floods regardless of the Scheme, but is not at an increased flood risk because of the Scheme. This is because the Scheme increases the capacity of the River Findhorn channel, which compensates for the fact that flood water from the River Findhorn can no longer flow through Forres to reach the Mosset Burn. Re-establishing the Back Run provides additional capacity on the lower reaches of the River Findhorn as it approaches Findhorn Bay.

So while individuals may feel their property to be more prone to flooding, the Scheme does not increase their flood risk, and at lower return periods it actually reduces it. At a 1 in 10 year flood the area landward of the sea flood bank is at lower flood risk because of the Scheme.

There are existing flap valves in the tidal flood bank (i.e. sea wall) that protect land against very high tides in Findhorn Bay, but allow surface water (normally) and flood water (exceptionally) to drain away from the area. The flap valves are the responsibility of the landowner.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Wright queried how big a job it would be to put flap valves in should there be a risk of some sort. In response, the Project Manager (River Findhorn and Pilmuir Flood Alleviation Scheme) advised that studies had shown there was no requirement for flap valves, noting that 'what if' scenarios can be very expensive. She stated that alternative solutions would be available if there was a requirement.

3. ELGIN FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME: PROGRESS

There was submitted a report by the Acting Corporate Director (Environmental Services) updating the Sub-Committee on the progress of Elgin Flood Alleviation Scheme. A copy of Monitoring Report No. 21 for the Scheme for April to end of June 2014 was provided as Appendix 1 to the report.

Following consideration, the Sub-Committee agreed to:-

- (i) note Monitoring Report No. 21 for the Elgin Flood Prevention Scheme 2007 for April to end of June 2014, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (ii) report progress to the Council.

4. FORRES (RIVER FINDHORN & PILMUIR) FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME: PROGRESS

There was submitted a report by the Acting Corporate Director (Environmental Services) updating the Sub-Committee on the progress of Forres (River Findhorn and Pilmuir) Flood Alleviation Scheme. A copy of Monitoring Report No. 11 for the Scheme for April 2014 to end of June 2014 was provided as Appendix 1 to the report.

Following consideration, the Sub-Committee agreed to:-

- (i) note Monitoring Report No. 11 for the Forres (river Findhorn and Pilmuir) Flood Alleviation for April 2014 to end of June 2014, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (ii) report progress to the Council.

5. MORAY FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEMES: FINANCIAL MONITORING SUMMARY

There was submitted a report by the Acting Corporate Director (Environmental Services) updating the Sub-Committee on the Moray Flood Alleviation Schemes in respect of financial monitoring and advising of key factors affecting costs of schemes. A summary sheet of actual costs and commitments for all Schemes to end of June 2014 was provided as Appendix 1 to the report.

Following consideration, the Sub-Committee agreed to note that:

- (i) the estimated capital cost of Schemes accords with the approved Financial Plan as far as can be ascertained at this point, with the exception of Forres (Burn of Mosset);
- (ii) following further review of risk and forecast construction and other costs, the out-turn for the Elgin Scheme is forecast to be £2,711,000 under budget;
- (iii) following further review of risk and forecast construction and other costs, the out-turn for the Forres (River Findhorn & Pilmuir) Scheme is forecast to be £6,647,000 under budget; and
- (iv) the forecast out-turn costs for the Rothes Scheme remains at £2,397,000 below budget.

6. TRIBUTE

The Sub-Committee, in noting that Mr Mike Newman, Technical Director, Royal Haskoning DHV was retiring the following week, joined the Chair in paying tribute to Mr Newman for his contribution to the Moray Flood Alleviation Schemes and wished him a long and happy retirement.