**FLOODING**

**BRIEFING PAPER**

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# Scottish Government support after recent flooding

# *Support to Individuals, Businesses and Local Authorities*

The Deputy First Minister announced in December 2015 that £3.94 million was being allocated to those local authority areas most affected by the severe flooding caused by Storm Desmond in early December in order to help them to support flood hit local households and businesses.

A further announcement of additional resources to be provided by the Scottish Government is to be made on 9 January 2016 to people, businesses and local authorities affected by Storm Frank and the adverse weather conditions in early January.

This additional allocation will extend the scheme to provide payments of £1500 for properties affected by flooding. The funding is to be used by local authorities to provide each flood affected household, business, community group (such as rugby clubs etc), or charitable organisation in the local authority area with a flat rate grant of £1,500 if they have been affected by flooding.

Once these payments have been made to individuals, businesses and other organisations, Local Authorities are free to use the remaining resources to assist the regeneration process after the flooding.

If a Local Authority does not have an allocation [detail in table below], they can make a payment of £1,500 to an affected individual, business or other organisation and seek recompense from the Scottish Government. **This means that any individual, business or other organisation in any part of Scotland can receive financial support if they have been affected by flooding.**

Allocations to Local Authorities

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Local Authority** | **Allocation in Dec 2015 (£m)** | **Allocation in Jan 2016 (£m)** | **Total (£m)** |
| Dumfries and Galloway | 0.7 | 1 | **1.7** |
| Scottish Borders | 1.94 | 0.45 | **2.39** |
| Perth and Kinross | 1.2 | 0.45 | **1.65** |
| Stirling | 0.06 |  | **0.06** |
| South Lanarkshire | 0.04 |  | **0.04** |
| Aberdeenshire |  | 2 | **2** |
| City of Aberdeen |  | 0.5 | **0.5** |
| Angus |  | 0.9 | **0.9** |
| East Ayrshire |  | 0.5 | **0.5** |
| Totals | 3.94 | 5.8 | **9.74** |

***Scottish Government financial support to businesses***

The Scottish Government will also provide a flat rate grant payment of £3,000 to businesses in any part of Scotland where there is evidence that their ability to trade has been severely impacted by flooding at the beginning of January. The grant will be a one-off payment to offset costs which cannot be covered by existing insurance, for example clean-up costs, materials and exceptional costs to help the business restore trade, such as marketing and promotion.

***Restoration of Infrastructure***

The Scottish Government will make available £5 million to assist in reinstating infrastructure that has been lost due to the recent flooding. A specific allocation will be made to Aberdeenshire Council to support the reinstatement of the A93 between Ballater and Braemar. The exact sum will be dependent on discussions with the Local Authority. Further bids from Local Authorities are invited.

***Agricultural Support***

The Scottish Government will open an Agricultural Floodbank Restoration Grant Scheme which will be available to the farming community to seek financial support to restore damaged floodbanks. The total available will be up to £1 million.

After poor weather in the Summer, the Scottish Government and the National Farmers Union of Scotland jointly established a Wet Weather Group to consider how the agricultural sector can be assisted at times of severe weather. The Group next meets on 11 January 2016 to discuss these issues and the Government will consider recommendations for support that come from the Group.

# *Bellwin Scheme*

The Bellwin Scheme was triggered on 7 December 2015 as a result of Storm Desmond and on 30 December 2015 as a result of Storm Frank. The Bellwin Scheme remains active in the aftermath of the latest severe flooding in early January 2016.

The Bellwin Scheme allows Scottish Ministers to make additional revenue support to local authorities to assist with the immediate, and unforeseen costs in dealing with the aftermath of emergency incidents. It is a discretionary scheme, which exists to give special financial assistance to local authorities who would otherwise be faced with an undue financial burden as a result of providing relief and carrying out immediate work due to large-scale emergencies. Local authorities are expected to include a small amount (0.2 per cent) within their annual budget to deal with unforeseen emergencies and 100% of eligible costs above this threshold will be met.

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# The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009

The Act introduces a more sustainable and modern approach to flood risk management, suited to the needs of the 21st century and to the impact of climate change. It also creates a more joined up and coordinated process to manage flood risk at a national and local level.

Specific measures within the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 include:

* A framework for coordination and cooperation between all organisations involved in flood risk management
* Assessment of flood risk and preparation of flood risk management plans
* New responsibilities for SEPA, Scottish Water and local authorities in relation to flood risk management
* A revised, streamlined process for flood protection schemes
* New methods to enable stakeholders and the public to contribute to managing flood risk;

The Act also requires SEPA to produce Flood Risk management Plans (known as Strategies) and submit them to Scottish Ministers for approval.

# Flood Risk Management Strategies

The Strategies coordinate efforts to tackle flooding in Scotland. They set the national direction of future flood risk management, helping to target investment and coordinate actions across public bodies. Taken together, the 14 Flood Risk Management Strategies will provide the first ever national plan for flood risk management in Scotland.

The strategies explain what causes flooding in high risk areas as well as the impacts when flooding does occur. This information is used as a basis for better decision-making across flood risk management organisations and supporting actions such as:

• Flood protection schemes.

• Flood warning schemes

• Natural flood management initiatives.

A strategy is available for each of the 14 Local Plan Districts in Scotland and were approved by Scottish Ministers in December 2015.

Across the 14 Strategies, there are 42 formal Flood Protection Schemes or engineering works proposed for 2016-21, costing an estimated £235 million, with potential benefits of £1,310 million. The total number of properties that could be protected by these schemes or works is projected to be 10,000.

The 42 schemes and works have been prioritised based on a number of criteria including benefit/cost analysis and the social and environmental impact of such schemes. The cost of the schemes and works is in line with the current capital settlement to local authorities announced in the draft Budget on 16 December 2015.

There are also 134 Flood Protection Studies proposed for progression during 2016-21, which will assess flood risk within a number of Potentially Vulnerable Area s and the feasibility of flood protection actions to mitigate the risk. These studies will improve our understanding of the challenges faced, and potential solutions for, around 26,000 residential properties currently at risk.

Other measures in the strategy include actions such as flood warning and community action.

The Strategies will be supplemented by the Local Flood Risk Management Plans which will provide additional local detail on the funding and delivery timetables for actions between 2016 and 2021. The Local Flood Risk Management Plans are due to be published in June 2016.

# Flood forecasting and warning

SEPA was been given significant new responsibilities under the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009. Central to SEPA's new role is the delivery of information and co-ordination of flood risk management in Scotland. Key to the success of this work will be the development of a close and productive working relationship with local authorities, Scottish Water and other public bodies, alongside stakeholders and the public. SEPA will continue to provide flood forecasting and warning services, and these are being continuously improved.

*SEPA Flood warning strategy*

SEPA is Scotland’s Flood Warning Authority and under the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 and the Civil Contingencies Act, has a responsibility for the development and provision of a timely and reliable flood warning service.

SEPA’s Flood Warning Strategy published in in 2012 made a number of strategic commitments to reducing the impact of flooding from all sources through the provision of an effective flood warning service. As part of this strategy SEPA has developed new flood warning schemes. We have provided additional funding of £189,000 in 2013/14, £188,000 in 2014/15 and £185,000 in 2015/16 to enable SEPA to implement the flood warning strategy.

SEPA plan to deliver 14 new flood warning schemes between 2016-2021. These include four coastal schemes and 10 river schemes and will deliver improvement to an additional 13% of Potentially Vulnerable Areas, on top of the 50% of Potentially Vulnerable Areas already benefiting from flood warning provision.

SEPA has piloted surface water flood forecasting to help urban areas improve their resilience to and preparedness for flooding. The development and wider roll-out of this service is being considered alongside the technical, resource and communication challenges associated with providing surface water flooding guidance. Delivery of all new flood warning schemes is dependent on funding.

*Floodline Service*

SEPA, through Floodline, provides direct warnings, live flooding information and advice on how to prepare for or cope with the impacts of flooding 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

With Scottish Government funding of £8.6 million, in March 2011 SEPA launched an extension of this service to provide free flood warnings direct to people through SMS or voicemail messaging in a more proactive service. The Floodline service provides Flood Alerts, Flood Warnings or Severe Flood Warnings directly to over 22,000 customers.

*Scottish Flood Forecasting Service*

We provided SEPA with an additional £560,000 to establish the Scottish Flood Forecasting Service (SFFS) in partnership with the Met Office; improving information available to local responders to proactively deal with potential flood events. The remaining £250,000 was funded by SEPA.

The SFFS was formally launched along with Floodine’s direct warning service on 21 March 2011. Each year we give SEPA £586,000 to operate the SFFS.

A daily Flood Guidance Statement is issued by the SFFS to emergency responders and provides immediate clarity as to current and forthcoming flood risk levels and locations, giving them advance notice of potential flooding situations to aid planning and coordination. Category 1 or 2 responders sign up to receive the Daily Flood Guidance Statement by emailing flooding@sepa.org.uk.

The Flood Guidance Statement helps manage expectations about potential duration of flood events and allows shared understanding of current and forthcoming flood risks. Improved flood forecasting abilities means that key emergency responders can be more vigilant and react as appropriate. Key partners and stakeholders are constantly kept in the loop and have access to up to date comprehensive information at hand for 5 days in advance.

These services are critical elements of SEPA’s role in warning and informing responders and the public of flood risk.

# Funding for Flood Protection Work

Flood protection schemes are led by local authorities and are funded via the local authority settlement.

Since 2008 the Scottish Government has provided funding of £42 million a year to local authorities through the General Capital Grant to support investment in major new flood protection schemes. All funding decisions about Schemes to be supported have been taken by a joint SG/COSLA committee.

From 2016-17 onwards, funding for flood protection will remain as part of the local authority financial settlement and will be distributed on the basis of priorities set out in Local Flood Risk Management Plans. This will support the statutory requirement for responsible authorities to agree funding of measures in these plans.

# Other Flood Funding

The Scottish Government has a budget of £1.447 million for Flooding within the Natural Assets and Flooding Budget. Of that, £250k is for Scotland’s contribution to the UK Coastal Monitoring and Forecasting Service, and the remaining £1.197m is used to support the following:

• We provide SEPA with £586,000 per year to run the Scottish Flood Forecasting Service in partnership with the Met Office; improving information available to local responders to proactively deal with potential flood events.

• We have also committed to continue to fund the implementation of SEPA’s Flood Warning Strategy and have provided £185,000 for improvements to flood warning in 2015/16.

• An additional £115k to SEPA for implementation of the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009.

• Funding worth £140k per financial year until 2015/16 to the Scottish Flood Forum to help enhance their support to promoting flood risk in the community and supporting those who have been affected by flood events.

• £55k to Education Scotland to raise awareness of flood risk through curriculum for excellence.

• Other ad hoc flood protection work including an annual Flood Risk Management Conference to share knowledge and experience among the flooding community in Scotland.

# SEPA Budget

SEPA grant in aid comprises of resource, principally to cover staff costs, and with provision of capital for buildings and equipment. In addition, they receive income from those regulatory activities for which they issue licences. Unlike the Environment Agency in England SEPA do not provide flood protection schemes; their flood risk management role is around advice warning.

SEPA are going through a financial and business planning exercise to plan and manage the £36.6 million budget set out on 16 December (a 6.2% reduction from the £39m they received in 2015-16). They will allocate this resource according to corporate priorities which are agreed with Ministers.

Funding for the flood forecasting service run by SEPA has been protected by the draft budget settlement put forward in December. Funding (£586k) for the system is provided directly by the Government and is in addition to the grant in aid that we provide to SEPA.

Terry A’Hearn, SEPA chief executive said: "*Flood warning and flood risk management are top priorities for SEPA and are essential to the health and wellbeing of the people of Scotland and to the Scottish economy. Like many public bodies we have a slightly reduced overall budget for next year, but will ensure that the budgets relating to our flooding responsibilities are protected and that these essential services remain fully functional and effective."* [issued to STV, 5/1]