

Flood Resilience Strategy – Scottish Government Consultation

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in Scotland. For information only to England, Northern Ireland and Wales

1 Executive Summary

The Scottish Government has released a consultation on developing a Flood Resilience Strategy. This strategy lays out what needs to be done in the long term to make places more flood resilient. They are seeking views on the key guiding principles and actions they will take, as action on flooding will require many more people to be involved than it has in the past.

[Click here](#) to complete the consultation by 13 August 2024. [Click here](#) to read the consultation paper.

2 Background

The Scottish Government is developing a Flood Resilience Strategy as part of Scotland's National Adaption Plan and the wider Just Transition commitments in response to the growing climate challenge. A warmer climate has led to increased winter rainfall and more intense short periods of summer rainfall, both of which have contributed to increased flooding alongside warmer temperatures contributing to rising sea levels. Recent events have shown that even with robust flood protection in place, bigger storms can still lead to significant flooding incidents. The Flood Resilience Strategy marks a change in thinking that flooding problems can be fixed and moves towards creating flood resilient places.

By the year 2100 it is expected that sea levels around the coast of Scotland will be at least 80cm higher and up to 1.9m higher, with peak rainfall intensities expected to increase by up to 50% and peak river flows expected to increase by up to 60%. SEPA estimate there are currently 284,000 properties in Scotland exposed to flooding with an extra 110,000 expected to be at risk by the 2080s. A long-term approach needs to be developed to ensure flood resilience is integrated into the decision-making process about places.

Following a great deal of Scottish Government consultation, they believe that the following key principles should underpin the Flood Resilience Strategy:

Guiding Principles of the Flood Resilience Strategy	
1	We will change the focus from 'fixing flooding problems' to creating flood resilient places.
2	Flood resilience is part of community resilience and part of adapting to climate change, so everyone has a role to play.
3	At the heart of our flood resilience activities will lie the principles of a Just Transition (to secure a fairer, greener future for all by working in partnership to deliver fairness and tackle inequality and injustice).
4	Everyone benefits from flood resilient places, and we all have a contribution to make.

The main themes of the consultation are People, Places and Processes. People are placed at the centre of the strategy; it is vital that they are included in the decision-making process for their places, that they are made aware of their exposure to flooding and the actions they can take as a community to become more flood resilient. Places can become more flood resilient through better design processes, for instance using land upstream of flood prone areas to capture water and slow down river flows; our villages, towns and cities can be improved in ways that bring multiple benefits to flood resilience, biodiversity and well-being. Processes are also important; we need to make changes to how we work together, how support is provided to delivery partners, how things are funded and what those funds are spent on.

3 Consultation Questions

1. Do you support the change from fixing flooding problems to creating flood resilient places?

2. How can decision makers ensure that actions taken to improve flood resilience align with the aims of a Just Transition to achieve a fairer, greener future?

3. Who do you think has a role in Scotland to help us become more flood resilient and help us adapt to the impacts of climate change? Individuals / Homeowners / Businesses / Scottish Government / Scottish Water / Local Authorities / SEPA / Landowners or land managers / Farmers and crofters / Housebuilders and developers / Community groups / Other

4. What support do communities need to become involved/engaged in climate adaptation and flood resilience planning?

5. What should local authorities be doing to ensure meaningful community participation when taking decisions about improving flood resilience?

6. What would help communities understand their current and future flood exposure and the range of options available to them to help them become more flood resilient? Access to flood maps showing current and future flood exposure / Access to local flood history / Access to information on community 'self help' options / Access to flood resilience advice and support / Access to information on the range of flood resilience options available for their community / Other

7. What actions could communities take to improve their flood resilience? Set up a local community flood resilience group / Develop a local community flood response plan / Share local knowledge of what happens during floods with organisations like SEPA and local authorities / Link up with their local climate action group / Other

8. What actions could householders/businesses take to improve their flood resilience? Learn about flood exposure in their area / Invest in property resilience measures / Join a community flood action group / Sign up to Floodline for flood alerts and warnings / Seek advice on flood resilience / Make sure they have flood insurance / Other

9. What would you do to improve your personal flood resilience? Find out how exposed you are to floods / Sign up to Floodline for flood alerts and warnings / Have a personal flood plan ready to put into action when flooding is expected / Ensure you know what to do if your property was to get flooded / Check your flood exposure before buying or renting a property / Make sure you have flood insurance / Other

10. How can we ensure that our places are designed to be flood resilient in future?

11. To what extent do you agree that there is a need to make space for water to improve the flood resilience of our villages, towns and cities?

12. In urban areas, we should make more use of our greenspace and urban watercourses to help manage increased rainfall and reduce the impacts of surface water flooding. Which of the following do you think would be most helpful? Increasing the use of sustainable drainage systems / Creating blue and green drainage networks to enhance existing drainage systems / Using available greenspace such as parks and sports pitches to help soak up and store water in the

heaviest rainfall events to prevent drainage systems becoming overwhelmed / Creating raingardens in public parks and streets / Other

13. If we are to make more use of our river catchments and coastal areas to increase our flood resilience, which of the following do you think would be most helpful? Using soil, and land management techniques to slow down the flow of water and increase infiltration and water retention / Using river and floodplain management techniques such as re-introducing meanders to rivers to slow flow and enhancing floodplains and wetlands to increase storage / Increasing woodland to help intercept, slow and store water throughout a catchment / Restoring peatlands to absorb, store and release water slowly / Enhancing natural dune systems to maintain a natural barrier that reduces the risk of tidal inundation / Managing saltmarsh and mudflats in estuaries to store water and dissipate wave energy / Other

14. Should moving communities away from areas with the highest exposure be considered as an option?

15. How might information, guidance, direction and technical support be provided for communities and flood management organisations?

16. How can we improve efficiency, consistency and value in delivering flood actions?

17. Other than large flood protection schemes, what flood resilience actions should we focus on supporting/spending available funding on? Maintaining existing flood protection / Small flood protection schemes / Natural flood management / Blue and green infrastructure (e.g. multi-purpose green space, such as floodable sports pitches) / Flood forecasting and warning / Property level flood resilience measures / Supporting local community flood resilience groups / Other

18. Do you think there is enough evidence and information to support the delivery of a broader range of flood resilience actions?

19. What other funding sources or mechanisms could be used to support flood resilience? Financial contributions from those who directly benefit from improved flood resilience (e.g. private sector/businesses) / All new development makes a contribution / Support natural flood management through payments to farmers, crofters and land managers (for example, Forestry Grant Scheme, the future agricultural support framework or Peatland ACTION payments) / Other

20. What is your main concern about flooding?

21. What one thing would do the most to improve Scotland's flood resilience?

22. Do you have any other comments?

4 APSE Comment

APSE encourages our members to respond to the consultation on the Flood Resilience Strategy. Flooding will affect all of our members in different ways, and it is important that our collective expertise is harnessed to future proof Scotland from the impacts of flooding. APSE Scotland would be happy to organize an online facilitated discussion in advance of the response deadline should anyone wish to engage with other APSE member authorities in Scotland. Please contact Louise Melville on Lmelville@apse.org.uk to confirm your interest.

APSE has many useful resources on flooding that would be worth viewing:

- APSE has previously held an event on flooding mitigation and climate change, the presentations are available online [here](#).
- APSE released a publication on rising to the climate challenge and the role of housing and planning within local councils that talks about flood risk management. This is available to read online for free [here](#).
- Adrian Crompton, Auditor General for Wales also provided [an article](#) in APSE Direct on the key issues facing the flooding sector in Wales.

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