

From: [Finnie, Peter](#)
To: [Barbara Elborn](#)
Subject: SEPA launch consultation on review of areas most at risk of flooding across Scotland
Date: 25 March 2024 19:01:27
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Barbara Elborn
Secretary
Newcastleton and District Community Council

25 March 2024

Dear Secretary,

SEPA launch consultation on review of areas most at risk of flooding across Scotland.

First let me apologise for a second communication in as many days and because I will also be communicating with you shortly with Official Statistics on Waste From All Sources – which may be of interest to Community Councillors.

The designation of Potential Vulnerable Areas (PVAs) is a SEPA science and evidence-led process and feedback from public partners and local communities is key to making sure all relevant impacts are taken into consideration.

Your views and the views of your community on the proposed PVAs will inform essential future flood risk management work so we can improve flooding resilience together and best prepare for a changing climate.

You can help with this SEPA consultation by sharing this message and our asset below, and available through this [link](#), on your social media and with local community/interest groups.

PVAs are areas where significant flood risk exists now or is likely to occur in the future and are used to identify locations where a partnership approach may be required to resolve widespread and often complex flooding issues.

They inform Scotland's Flood Risk Management (FRM) Plans and Local Flood Risk Management Plans and become the focus of FRM actions, helping responsible authorities to prioritise investment and coordinate actions to reduce the impacts of flooding on communities.

Identifying PVAs is an essential part of protecting people, properties, businesses, communities, infrastructure, and our environment, with an estimated 284,000 homes, businesses and services across Scotland currently identified as at risk of flooding.

This winter, SEPA issued a [record number](#) of regional Flood Alerts and local Flood Warnings to the public. A total of 720 messages were sent between 1st September 2023 and 16th February 2024. The previous record of 714 was set over autumn and winter 2015/16.

Siobhan McNulty, Flood Risk Planning Manager at SEPA, said: "Scotland is witnessing an increasing number of extreme weather events and flooding presents a growing threat to our communities.

"It is vital we work together with partners and communities to identify the areas most at risk so we can work together to increase Scotland's resilience to flooding. PVAs are the first step in this process."

Informing Scotland's flood risk management process

Since PVAs were first identified in 2011, SEPA have worked together with partners including local authorities and Scottish Water to plan and deliver actions to manage flood risk in the places where it is needed most.

Based on the [National Flood Risk Assessment](#), PVAs are updated and published by SEPA every six years as required by the [Flood Risk Management \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#). The designation of PVAs takes into consideration past, current and future flood risk from rivers, the sea and surface water using recorded events, observations and strategic flood modelling.

SEPA are now consulting on proposed updates to PVAs for 2024. The review will focus on smaller, community-based target areas set within wider zones of influence to provide clearer information on how flood risk is tackled in Scotland.

Once the PVAs are formally designated by Scottish Ministers, SEPA will then prepare FRM plans to set objectives and actions for reducing flood risk. The local FRM plans published by each lead local authority will then provide more detail, including timescales and funding.

Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Net Zero and Energy Màiri McAllan said: "Managing our exposure to floods and their impacts is a significant and growing challenge as climate change brings more severe and frequent flood events.

"Improving resilience to flooding is a priority for the Scottish Government, so I welcome the launch of this consultation and I encourage all parties with a potential interest to engage with it."

Helping communities at greatest flood risk

One community that has historically suffered from flooding is Stonehaven, which has been designated a PVA since the first cycle in 2011.

Several actions have since been identified and delivered through flood risk management plans developed by SEPA and Aberdeenshire Council, with input from the Stonehaven Flood Action Group and the wider community.

These include the completion of the Stonehaven Flood Protection Scheme which is designed to protect against flooding from the Glaslaw Burn and the River Carron, and benefits around 370 homes and businesses by reducing fluvial flooding. Other actions that have been delivered for Stonehaven are a new coastal flood warning system, updated coastal flood hazard maps and the completion of the Stonehaven Bay coastal flood study.

Cllr Alan Turner, Chair of Aberdeenshire Council's Infrastructure Services Committee, said: "I was delighted to see the completion of the Stonehaven Flood Protection Scheme. This demonstrates real progress being made to mitigate flooding impacts in the town.

"The scheme was built following consultation and engagement with the residents, businesses, and the Stonehaven Flood Action Group. That entire process started with a PVA assessment, where coordinated actions were established through PVA recommendations.

"A PVA designation is an invaluable aid - firstly in the understanding of potential impacts of flooding and secondly through the implementation of tangible solutions which will provide reassurance to communities."

Have your say on PVAs

While the designation of PVAs is a science and evidence-led process, feedback from public partners and local communities is key to making sure all relevant impacts are taken into consideration.

Siobhan McNulty said: “Whether you have previously been affected by flooding or have concerns about potential future impacts for your home, business or community, we want to hear from you.

“Your views on the proposed PVAs will inform essential future flood risk management work so we can improve flooding resilience together and best prepare for a changing climate.”

You and your communities can respond to the [consultation on PVAs via Citizen Space](#) until 24 June 2024.

Regards

Peter

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Additional Notes

- [Read SEPA's 2024 PVAs consultation](#) in full. The consultation runs from 25 March to 24 June 2024. The review will then be sent to Scottish Government for ministerial approval. It is due to be published by 22 December 2024.
- [Find out more about Local Flood Risk Management Plans](#). New plans are scheduled for publication in December 2027.
- Not being included in a PVA does not mean that the risk of flooding is insignificant to the individual or that support will not be provided by flood risk authorities. Flood risk management actions will still be applicable to those people at risk of flooding outside of the PVAs.
- Actions identified in FRM plans are subject to Scottish Government budget allocation and Local Authority spending priorities.