

Introduction to Scottish Environment LINK

Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment community, with over 40 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society.

Its member bodies represent a wide community of environmental interest, sharing the common goal of contributing to a more sustainable society. LINK provides a forum for these organisations, enabling informed debate, assisting co-operation within the voluntary sector, and acting as a strong voice for the environment. Acting at local, national and international levels, LINK aims to ensure that the environmental community participates in the development of policy and legislation affecting Scotland.

LINK works mainly through groups of members working together on topics of mutual interest, exploring the issues and developing advocacy to promote sustainable development, respecting environmental limits.

- 1. Do you support the change from fixing flooding problems to creating flood resilient places? Yes/No - please give the reason(s) for your answer.**

Yes.

- 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?**

Research has shown that socio-economically deprived areas have a much higher risk of being impacted by flooding than wealthier areas. Decision makers need to ensure that socio-economically deprived areas have the same provision of high quality natural green and blue spaces close to where they live and work. This will help with flood alleviation and also raise awareness of the importance of natural environment for the well-being of all communities.

- 3. Who do you think has a role in Scotland to help us become more flood resilient and to help us adapt to the impacts of climate change? (Please rank from most to least important)**

- 1. Individuals**
- 2. Homeowners**
- 3. Businesses**
- 4. Scottish Government**

5. **Scottish Water**
6. **Local Authorities**
7. **Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)**
8. **Land owners/land managers**
9. **Farmers and crofters**
10. **House builders/developers**
11. **Community groups**
12. **Other (please specify)**

Non-Governmental organisations.

All are of equal importance.

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

Community engagement - easy to understand and clear information and guidance. Less conflicting viewpoints in communications and a coherent approach/message.

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

As per above - better engagement and communications, as well as showing that the local authority is taking action and not just talking about the issue.

1. **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? (Please rank from most to least important)**
2. **Access to information on community "self-help" options.**
3. **Access to flood resilience advice/support**
4. **Access to information on the range of flood resilience options available for their community**
5. **Access to flood maps showing current and future flood exposure**
6. **Access to local flood history**
7. **Other (please specify)**

7. **What actions could communities take to improve their flood resilience?**

(Please rank from most to least important)

1. **Set up a local community flood resilience group**
2. **Share local knowledge of what happens during floods with organisations like SEPA and local authorities**
3. **Develop a local community flood response plan**

4. **Link up with their local climate action group**
5. **Make sure they have flood insurance**
6. **Other (please specify)**

9. **What would you do to improve your personal flood resilience? (Please rank by importance)**

1. **Find out how exposed you are to floods**
2. **Sign-up to Floodline for flood alerts and warnings**
3. **Have a personal flood plan ready to put into action when flooding is expected**
4. **Ensure you know what to do if your property was to get flooded**
5. **Check your flood expo**

N/A

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

We need to take a catchment-wide approach to flood management. Restoration of peatlands, and the deployment of natural flood management techniques such as leaky dams and re-meandering, together with re-connecting watercourses to their floodplain will help to slow the flow and store water in the catchment until water levels have returned to normal. This will help to reduce the peak flows in watercourses, helping to protect communities downstream. In urban areas the use of green roofs, SUDs and rain gardens will also help to slow the flow of rainwater into the drainage network, thus reducing flooding and preventing spillages from combined sewer systems.

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?**

Strongly agree.

12. **Which of the following do you think would be helpful? (Please rank by importance)**

1. **Creating blue and green drainage networks to enhance existing drainage systems**
2. **Creating raingardens in public parks and streets**
3. **Using available greenspace such parks and sports pitches to help soak up and store water in the heaviest rainfall events to prevent drainage systems becoming overwhelmed**
4. **Increasing the use of sustainable drainage systems**
5. **Other (please specify)**

13. Which of the following do you think would be helpful? (Please rank by importance)

- 1. Using soil, and land management techniques to slow down the flow of water and increase infiltration and water retention**
- 2. Using river and floodplain management techniques such as reintroducing meanders to rivers to slow flow and enhancing floodplains and wetlands to increase storage**
- 3. Increasing woodland to help intercept, slow and store water throughout a catchment**
- 4. Restoring peatlands to absorb, store and release water slowly.**
- 5. Enhancing natural dune systems to maintain a natural barrier that reduces the risk of tidal inundation**
- 6. Managing saltmarsh and mudflats in estuaries to store water and dissipate wave energy**
- 7. Other (please specify)**

All are of equal importance and a place-based, entire water catchment approach should be taken.

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

Yes/No - please give the reason(s) for your answer.

Yes, as an option of last resort. Flood resilience should focus upon natural flood management approaches first such as slowing the flow through leaky dams and other natural features, and allowing watercourses to use their floodplains. Where this is not sufficient, hard engineering solutions may be appropriate. If after both these approaches have been fully exhausted there is still an unacceptable risk of flooding of properties then consideration may have to be given to moving the affected community.

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

Could be provided through community events such as school fetes, festivals etc. Resources could be provided to charities/NGOs to promote as part of their community activities.

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

In Scotland we are already ahead of the game with using sustainable solutions to flood risk. Our flood management legislation advocates a sustainable approach to reducing flood risk, including the use of natural flood management techniques such as riparian and catchment woodland creation, river restoration, instream woody debris, and floodplain washlands. However, the uptake of these measures is

generally low, and much more could be done to manage our freshwater environment in a natural, sustainable way.

Climate change is recognised as a major driver of change in nature, globally. The impacts of climate change on freshwaters are likely to include increased air and water temperatures and an increased extent and frequency of flooding and droughts. Giving more space for rivers and coasts to move and adjust naturally will help us to adapt to climate change, while also regenerating habitat, and improving wildlife. Spatial planning must prevent development on floodplains, and measures to ensure sustainable land use (e.g. arable reversion) and management (e.g. crop rotations) will be necessary to support our adaptation to the effects of climate change, helping to restore the functionality of some floodplains. High proportions of rivers are disconnected from their floodplain by embankments and flow control structures, limiting the scope of those floodplains to hold water during high flows and contributing to downstream flooding issues. This loss of connectivity must be reversed. Mapping of priority wetland habitats which identifies existing areas of good-quality habitat as well as opportunities for restoration, should be drawn upon to identify areas where habitat restoration or recreation will be valuable to support biodiversity delivery as well as creating functional floodplains / coastal habitats that can play a role in flood and coastal erosion risk management.

17. Other than large flood protection schemes, what other flood resilience actions should we focus on supporting/spending available funding on? (Please rank by importance)

- 1. Natural flood management**
- 2. Blue and green infrastructure (e.g. multi-purpose green space, such as floodable sports pitches)**
- 3. Supporting local community flood resilience groups**
- 4. Small flood protection schemes**
- 5. Maintaining existing flood protection**
- 6. Flood forecasting and warning**
- 7. Property level flood resilience measures**
- 8. Other (please specify)**

18. Do you think there is enough evidence and information to support the delivery of a broader range of flood resilience actions? Yes/No –

If No, please let us know what you think our evidence and information gaps are.

19. What other funding sources or mechanisms could be used to support flood resilience? (Please rank by importance)

1. **Financial contributions from those who directly benefit from improved flood resilience (e.g. private sector/businesses)**
2. **All new development makes a contribution to improving flood resilience**
3. **Support natural flood management through payments to farmers, crofters and land managers (for example, Forestry Grant Scheme, the future agricultural support framework or PeatlandACTION payments)**
4. **Other (please specify)**

All are of equal importance.

20. What is your main concern about flooding?

Climate change is increasing the frequency and magnitude of flood events. Existing hard-engineering solutions are increasingly failing to deal with larger flood events. We need to have an integrated, whole catchment approach to water management and not merely try and deal with it at the point where it is affecting communities.

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

Take a holistic, catchment-wide approach to flooding, ensuring that water is kept in the upper catchment of watercourses for as long as possible to prevent flooding of communities downstream.

This response is supported by:

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Scottish Environment LINK the voice for Scotland's environment

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