



Policy to Preparedness: Flood policy and community engagement

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Aims

This research investigated the interconnectedness of policies relevant to pluvial and fluvial flood exposure and management. It contextualises this within the latest academic research on social perceptions, preparedness behaviours, and the engagement of communities with flood resilience.

Policy mapping

A policy analysis found that there are beneficial synergies between recent Scottish policies, including those that are not directly flooding-focused. These policies are increasingly embedding flood preparedness and adaptation within them, and evolving from a historical focus on prevention to instead target upstream adaptation to flood exposure. The analysis also concluded that the current egalitarian Scottish flood policy paradigm has evolved significantly from a historic UK paternalistic policy approach that prioritised the state response.

However, while flooding is included in multiple strategies and plans, the analysis found difficulty in determining where priorities lay during the implementation phases of these policies. Potentially diverse strategic agendas and targets across organisations, even when implementing the same policies, may result in competing priorities and hence siloed adoption rather than partnership working.

Community resilience

The egalitarian assumption of equity has yet to be realised in most countries, not least because the distribution of physical flood exposure is not fair nor equal, and nor are the social circumstances of many who live on low incomes with limited resources. Recognition of the diversity of circumstances, viewpoints and vulnerabilities in Scotland is essential to build place-based sustainable community flood resilience.

Conclusions & recommendations

Recent flood-related policies are interconnected at regional, Scottish and UK levels. The egalitarian approach evident within them is supportive of climate and social justice. However, academic evidence demonstrates that the implementation of these policies may become problematic in three ways, namely where 1) they integrate and compete with other regional policies, plans and agendas; 2) there is inequity in resource distribution, participation and recognition between and within communities; and 3) they meet a diversity of needs, wants and capacities of individuals and communities. While egalitarian approaches are the ideal when pursuing climate and social justice, such policies face a complex test when they are implemented amongst the inequalities endemic in society. Therefore, if Scotland is to become a flood resilient country, it must invest expertise, finances and resources at local level to ensure that everyone, including disadvantaged, marginalised and lesser heard groups, can participate in their place-based community flood resilience.

Please reference this project summary as follows: F. Henderson, R. Dohain Lesueur, B. Bennett, K. Helwig, Z. San Jose (2024) *Policy to preparedness: Flood policy and community engagement Project Summary*. CSPF2023_03. Centre of Expertise for Waters (CREW). **To access the policy brief for this project, please visit:** crew.ac.uk/publication/policy-to-preparedness

POLICY TO PREPAREDNESS

PLUVIAL AND FLUVIAL FLOODING

PERCEPTIONS AND POTENTIAL BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

POLICIES COME ALIVE WITH IMPLEMENTATION

INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF PLACE MAKING, COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

NEW ACTION

BOWLING CLUB

FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

COMPLEX

Adult's Health and Wellbeing

Children's Health and Wellbeing

CITY PLANNING

POLICY TENSIONS

IT'S SEWERAGE

I just feel like I'm banging my head against a brick wall

FLOODING CASE STUDIES: A one off, or a symptom of a wider issue?

COMMUNITY OBJECTIONS

INCREASING COST

We are working in SILOS in Authorities

INTER AGENCY CONFLICT

IT'S DRAINAGE

BUCK PASSING

LOCAL FRICTION

INITIAL CONSULTATION IS KEY

WHO IS IMPACTED?

MUST BE SOCIALLY JUST

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS

CLASHES AND GAPS

NATIONAL POLICIES

It's complex and emotive and we need to get a grip of it

UNDERSTAND THE BIGGER PICTURE

LISTEN TO THEM

WE'RE NOT EXPERTS IN THIS ISSUE

INDEPENDENT BROKER?

REPORT EMPOWER COMMUNITY WITH GOOD INFORMATION

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

LOCAL POLICIES

IMPACT OF LOCAL POLITICS

OVERVIEW AND STRATEGY NEEDED

MUST BE RESOURCED

EMBRACING CHANGE

PARTNERSHIPS

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

ENABLE SMALL SCALE CHANGE

HONESTY

EMPOWER POSITIVE LOCAL ACTION

ALIGN POLICIES

COMPROMISE

A CHANGE OF MINDSET

CREW

LEGACY OF POOR ENGAGEMENT

In the future we might not have the level of certainty and safeguarding that people want

WHAT PROCESSES DO WE NEED TO CHANGE

Holistic Place planning

REALISTIC: THINGS MIGHT CHANGE BETWEEN IDEA AND REALITY

NEW SOCIAL NORMS

GCU Glasgow Caledonian University

University for the Common Good

CENTRE OF EXPERTISE FOR WATERS

JENNY CAPON DRAWS

Visual minutes from project workshop. Graphic Artist: Jenny Capon.