



PRESS RELEASE

Is 'Making Space for Water' now being watered down????

Despite efforts by Stakeholders to resolve the issue of Flooding Exposure in the UK – has Ministerial 'confidence' already evaporated into more empty promises?

For 5 million+ of the UK Population, their property exposure to serious flooding represents a position of potential financial meltdown - without flood cover.

ACCESSIBLE DATA

From improving information, the Environment Agency (EA) revised the number of properties at significant risk – from 220,000 in 2002 – to 570,000 in 2006 - a 259% increase - despite removing 80,000 properties now protected by civil schemes.

Awareness exists, particularly since New Orleans - that flood defences - if overtopped, exacerbates the consequences of extreme events. What lessons have Government learned?

Many at significant risk property owners - still cannot access clear information.

Currently, despite £millions spent on publicity and feasibility studies, only 16% of those at risk have undertaken a review. Without clarity who might receive assistance much less have invested in flood protection.

A QUESTION OF JOINED UP THINKING

No rational person or group likes the idea of planning for WAR – even to achieve clear agreed objectives – so is Global Warming now no longer considered a more significant risk than Global Terrorism?

Recent cutbacks in Government flood alleviation budgets, suggests so and undermines the 'Secure Financial Framework' which started in 2004. Professionals and Stakeholders need certainty to attain overarching sustainable solutions over decades. Any fragmented approach causes uncertainty – damaging the marketing needed to convince flood victims that they are not impotent and should seek help to protect their properties.

Worse, key policies, pilot schemes and grants for individual 'property specific' options re properties at significant risk [many suffering repeated flood events] have stalled!

All agree that flood events cannot be entirely alleviated – so all available money must be a 'best value spend'!

COMBINED SUPPORT

The UK is currently world leaders in providing proven and certificated 'property specific' systems, which can alternate with/enhance civil engineered solutions. They are more affordable and even more cost effective for properties in remote areas.

Over 3,000 properties are so protected and many already proven to be flood resistant. The 'social benefits of mitigating trauma/consequential costs/restoring 'peace of mind' and property values is also fact.

The Association of British Insurers (ABI) have since the 1998/2000 floods - helped



prevent large scale financial meltdown for many – by maintaining Flood Cover in increasing adverse risk conditions – but will budget cuts in flood risk reduction torpedo this?

LEGAL IMPLICATION(S)

Individual owners still remain responsible under English Law for protecting their property from Flood.

Where ‘Planners’ ignore **EA** advice - they face ‘claims’ for compensation when flooding ensues.

The Government must provide ‘KEY’ guidance notes defining flood resistance and/or resilience – in order that Planning and Building Control Officers can check Developers’ submissions accordingly.

Designers will welcome **JOINED UP PLANNING** - as it helps Clients achieve sustainability.

PRACTICAL SOLUTION(S)

Make ‘more accessible information’ available - so those with property at risk can make informed decisions and take appropriate action quickly. Implementing flood management becomes important if ‘Flood Cover’ is to be maintained and the risk protected at an acceptable cost.

A simplified one stop Grant Scheme, negating top slicing 40% for administration out of a ‘limited’ £570m budget – will enable property owners to take action when supported by equitable/cost effective methodology - ‘pump priming’ an effective long term flood mitigation strategy.

Misleading stakeholders and public alike, cutting flood defence budgets, and then stating how on message the government is by giving back £8m of the £15m cut, is deplorable. Burying the ICE report “Learning to live with rivers”2001 because this report outlines the truth of lack of maintenance to our crumbling flood defences. In this 2001 Presidential Commissioned report it states the current annual investment in maintenance of all our assets amounts to 0.5% of the replacement cost. As we now see despite the evidence and advice flooding is an even bigger issue.

Being able to commercially rationalise risk protection is the ‘key’ that any Scheme requires, improving data will enable simple verification of those properties most deserving of Grant support.

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