

An illustration of a city skyline in purple and grey silhouettes against a background of yellow and purple hills. The sky is light blue with white clouds, and a cluster of blue raindrops is falling on the right side of the hills.

Towards Scotland's first Flood Resilience Strategy: Engaging with Stakeholders

Report of 2023
engagement process



climateXchange



Introduction and why we engaged

Scotland's Programme for Government 2022 set out the aim to consult on a new flooding strategy for Scotland, including how we can build community flood resilience and engage a broader range of delivery partners to deliver more diverse flood management actions faster.

Scottish Government is committed to producing Scotland's first Flood Resilience Strategy in 2024.

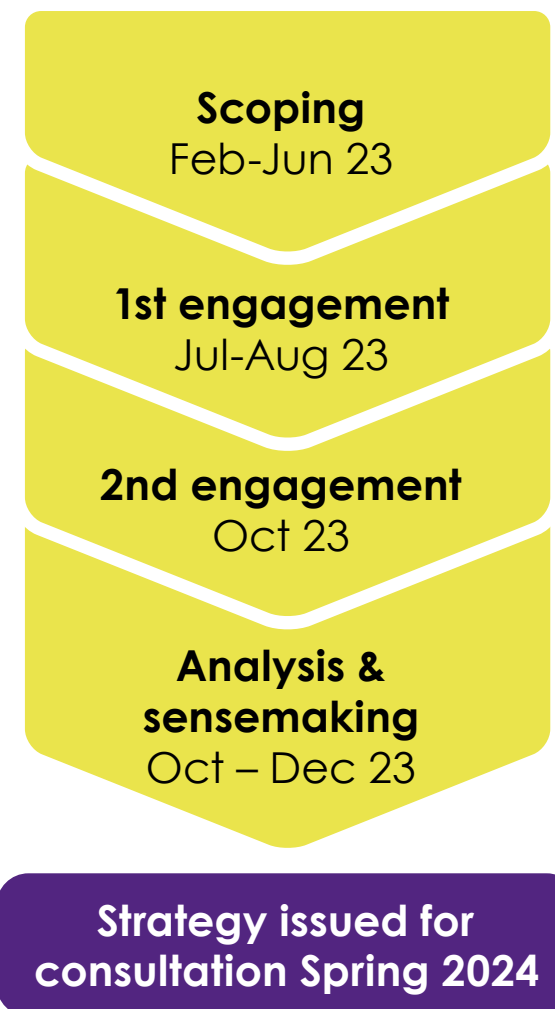
The purpose of the Strategy is to change our approach from 'fixing flooding problems' to creating flood resilient places; to lay out the principles to improve flood resilience, and to set out strategic changes that are needed.

To support the development of the Strategy, Sniffer was commissioned to engage with a diverse range of stakeholders during 2023, working collaboratively with the Scottish Flood Forum and ClimateXChange.

This document sets out our approach to stakeholder engagement activities during 2023, our findings and what happens next.

How we engaged

- Feb-Apr 2023 – **Online scoping survey** with the flood resilience community.
- June 2023 – **Scoping workshop** with policy leads and others to set direction for Strategy development.
- July – August 2023 – **Stage 1 Big Picture workshops x 4** – (Practitioner workshops: one online, one in person (Edinburgh) and community representative workshops: one online and one in person (Perth)).
- October 2023 – **Stage 2 – Towards Flood Resilience Strategy workshops x 5** Two online and three in person practitioner/ community workshops (Glasgow, Inverness and Dumfries).
- October 2023 – **Workshop on joining up policy and implementation.**
- October 2023 – **Online survey.**



Who took part

Stage 1 Big Picture workshops

186 sign-ups with **172 people** taking part representing **122** separate organisations

- Government/Agencies – 20 participants.
- Consultancies/private sector – 21 participants.
- Local Authorities – 15 participants.
- Academia – 10 participants.
- Community Group or Trust – 24 participants.
- Third Sector Organisations – 20 participants.
- Individual – 3 participants.

Stage 2 Towards a Flood Resilience Strategy workshops

180 sign-ups with **129** people taking part

- Community/third sector or placemaking representatives from a wide variety of community types, reflective of the range of sources of flooding – 45 participants.
- Policy makers – 28 participants.
- Flood resilience practitioners – 56 participants.

An **online policy workshop** with Scottish Government and agencies with 33 participants covering adaptation, resilience, biodiversity, forestry, peatland, agriculture, planning and architecture, communications, and communities.

Online survey – 55 responses.



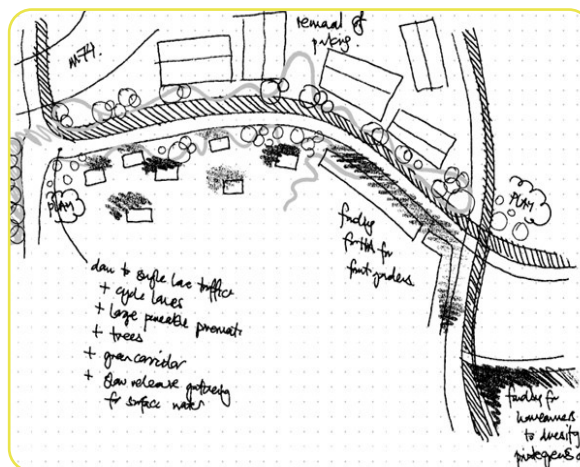
Our approach

Stage 1 workshops explored the big picture building blocks for a Flood Resilience Strategy from the perspectives of practitioners and communities, and what a Strategy could look like. This identified several key themes that formed the basis of further workshops.

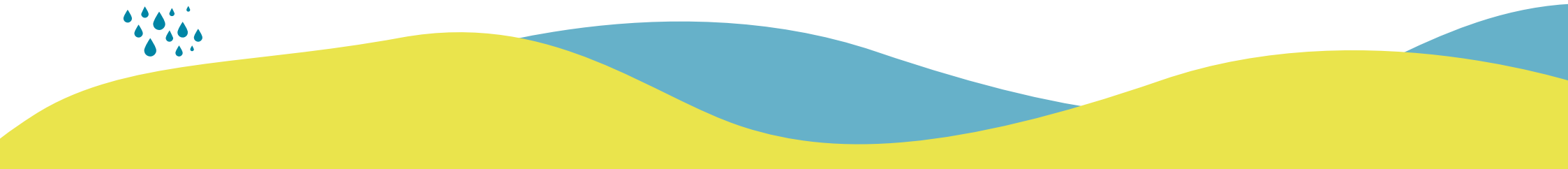
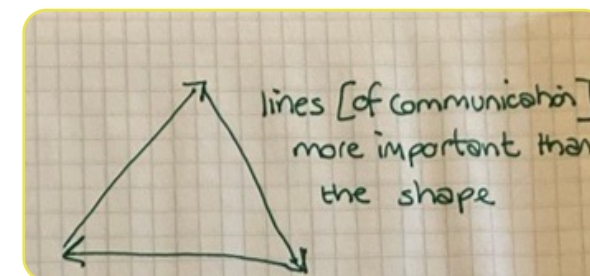
Stage 2 workshops brought together practitioners, policy and community representatives to explore what good looks like in terms of a flood resilient Scotland in 2045, and what is needed to get there, along with some indicators of success.

A policy workshop explored how joined up policy can support flood resilience.

The online survey asked respondents to highlight three key things that would make their place more flood resilient and key actions or decisions that needed to happen to create flood resilient places.



Participants' perspectives of flood resilient places



What we found

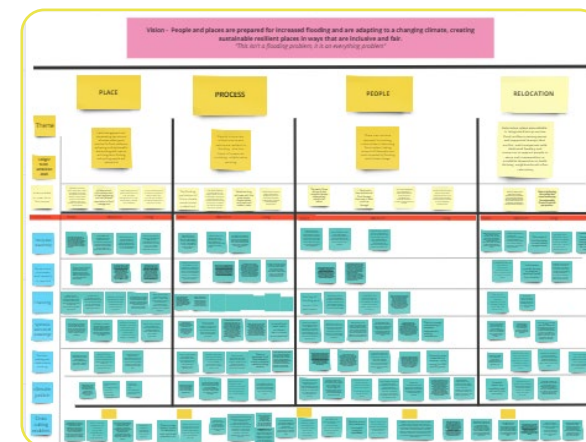
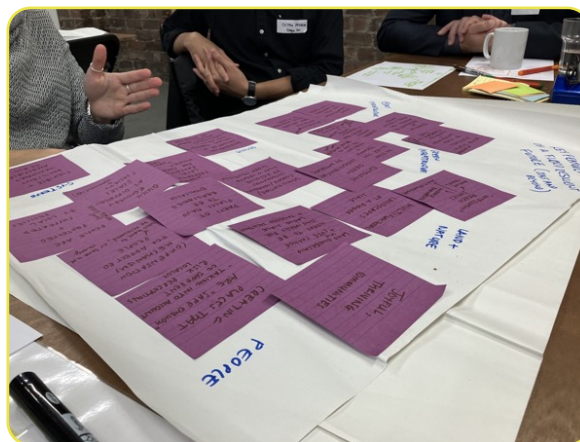
Our first set of workshops which focused on the building blocks for a flood resilient Scotland identified key issues as:

- Land and place.
- Inclusive community engagement.
- Working together to make good decisions.
- Roles and responsibilities.
- Sharing our knowledge and stories.

It also addressed what a successful strategy could look like and how to measure success.

Building on these, in stage 2 we identified enabling conditions that participants considered would help to achieve a flood resilient Scotland by 2045. Clustering these we were able to create a Theory of Change that sets out the vision, outcomes and enablers as the key pillars of **People**, **Place** and **Process**, as well as an additional priority of Relocation.

This Theory of Change can be accessed here:
<https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVnK0N7sl=/>



Vision for a Flood Resilient Scotland






People and places are prepared for increased flooding and are adapting to a changing climate, creating sustainable resilient places in ways that are inclusive and fair.

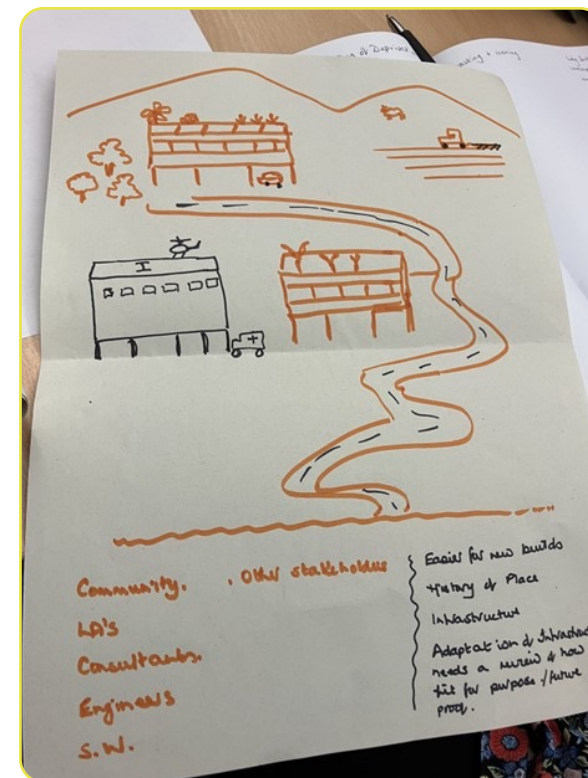
“This isn’t a flooding problem, it is an everything problem”

Vision

Flooding is viewed in a more holistic way, with improved planning and decision-making processes, a multiple benefit approach used to identify and implementing solutions and co-visioning with communities. All this is enabled by a clarification of responsibilities and the opportunities flood resilience can provide for wider benefits.

For each of the four pillars (people, place, process and relocation) in the Theory of Change, we set out the enabling conditions in the next five slides, themed as follows:

-  Policy and Leadership.
-  Decision making and collaborative working.
-  Financing.
-  Knowledge and Data.
-  Climate Justice.



Participants’ perspectives of flood resilient places

People

Vision

There is an inclusive approach to involving communities in becoming flood resilient, taking account of those who are most impacted by flooding and climate change

Desired outcomes

- The needs of those who are climate vulnerable has been addressed and nobody is left behind.
- People who have experienced flood damage have a say in what counts as “damage”.
- Community engagement and involvement is a valued multi-directional process.

Enabling conditions identified through the engagement process



- **Climate justice and understanding of flood disadvantage** is centred in national and local policies and support.
- There is a “**golden thread**” from national policy through to local action.
- **Local democracy and local fora** are strengthened so that communities can feed into the design process for flood resilience actions, with clear channels of communication.



- Agencies and communities work together to address all aspects of Place. There is a **shift in public sector focus to collaborate** with communities rather than inform/consult, applying the Scottish Community Development Centre good practice and having both the culture and mechanisms for collaborative decision making and long-term investment.
- **A resourced pool of trusted intermediaries, brokers, mediators and experts** work with communities, including a stronger role for **Scottish Flood Forum** and flood coordinators.
- People within localities are provided with **expert science knowledge sessions** to support decisions on local flood issues proactively.



- **Guidance and funding support is available for homeowners and landlords** to make properties more flood resilient.
- People understand their responsibilities regarding resilience, flood risk is included in **home reports**.
- **Communities have continued access to flood insurance** but acknowledge that some locations will not be viable to protect or insure in the future.
- **Resources are directed to building social cohesion and to equipping the voluntary sector**, with community resilience groups and Flood Action Groups upscaled and better resourced.



- Agencies and communities work together to address all aspects of **resilient placemaking** and flood response.
- People have access to and understand **information about flood risk/flood warnings and a changing climate** and increased awareness of what is likely to happen when flooding occurs.
- **A one-stop-shop for flood resilience** provides greater accessibility of future climate scenarios and projections and implications for flooding and coastal erosion.



- **Local planning decisions move away from driving lower income and vulnerable groups to areas at high risk of flooding**, and these groups have support for resilience measures including affordable insurance.
- **Support exists for retrofit** for low-income households, social housing and those living in the private rented sector.
- **Decisions on vulnerability are clear** with priority areas being aligned with the situation on the ground, drawing on socio-economic realities.
- **Support is available for the time-poor and communities facing multiple deprivation** to share their views. This may necessitate paying people for their time. There is plurality of voices and **space for quieter community voices**.

Place

Vision

Land management and placemaking decisions at all scales reflect good practice for flood resilience, achieving multiple benefits and working with nature, with long-term thinking and putting people and nature first.

Desired outcomes

- A joined-up approach across policy areas, sectors and society so that land management and policy decisions reinforce each other to support flood resilience rather than conflict, and local priorities are considered.
- A balanced and informed approach to hard engineering and nature-based approaches to flood management.
- Well designed blue green infrastructure with multiple benefits for net zero, biodiversity, health and wellbeing.
- New developments in areas of high flood risk (current and future) are avoided and flood plains give space for water.

Enabling conditions identified through the engagement process



- **Flood resilience is embedded into core legislation across multiple policy areas**, the planning system plays a consistent and enforcing role in determining where is suitable to build.
- **Statutory guidance is in place for developers** including nature-based water management and integrated long-term plans for sustainable drainage across multiple sites.
- **Place planning integrates flooding in a coherent way** in Regional, Local Development Plans and Local Place plans, Land Use Partnerships, regional adaptation plans and place-based partnerships.



- A coordinated catchment-scale approach is in place with a **regional or catchment level authority** responsible for planning, alignment and delivery.
- **Decision making is transparent** in relation to flood resilience.
- **Public agencies work together** with a coordinated response. The **Place Principle** is acted on to make community flood resilience an integral part of local action and place plans.



- Taxation on **land ownership** reflects the public good delivered and financial incentives are in place for landowners, land managers and communities for adaptive land practice.
- Private **finance** is understood and used effectively alongside public finance, with government funding rationalised to deliver joined up, holistic, place-based solutions.
- **Developers** contribute financially to increase resilience when new developments are granted planning permission.



- The conditions are in place to “get development and planning decisions right” at different scales, with **landowners and land managers aware of the trade-offs around land management and what is needed to** support flood resilience.
- Decision makers including those involved in the planning system have the **knowledge** needed to create resilient places and how to involve communities.



- Competing land uses and power dynamics are addressed as part of the Just Transition and the **trade-offs around allocation of land** for different purposes are understood.
- Those engaged in flood management take account of **vulnerable communities**.

Process

Vision

People, properties, infrastructure and nature are resilient to flooding due to a blend of measures.

Desired outcomes

- The flooding implications of future climate scenarios are understood.
- The public, developers and place-makers are taking a holistic approach to adaptation including for infrastructure and at a property level, with existing housing stock retrofitted and new housing fitted with PFR as standard.
- People are living with water with blue green spaces, climate resilient catchments and resilient coasts.
- People are aware of what is likely to happen when flooding does occur and know how to take action, including being supported to recover well after flooding events.

Enabling conditions identified through the engagement process



- Government sets out **climate change policy levers and state obligations** including resilient building standards, data collection, sharing and integration of climate change across public bodies.
- Policy encourages **cross-sectoral partnerships** mandating for property level protection and increasing funding for flood resilience and coastal erosion.



- **There is a new paradigm** with revised roles, responsibilities, powers and funding structures, with potential for an independent flood protection advisory/regulatory body.
- **Systems are in place**, nationally and locally, to prepare for, respond to and mitigate flooding with more emphasis on resilient place making.
- There is **improved coordination** with local agencies, infrastructure providers, landowners and developers working together to reduce risk of and respond to flooding.
- There is a requirement for all **flood schemes to actively involve local partners** including residents.



- There is **major investment in properties and landscapes “retrofitted” for flood resilience, with simplified approaches to funding** through joined up public sector finance delivering multiple benefits and attracting private sector funding.
- **Stronger regulation** and requirements for flood resilience measures on public and private land drives investment and change with long-term thinking and revenue plans.
- **A national programme for property level protection** creates a thriving sector of local suppliers with **public information campaigns and grant schemes** for bulk purchase initiatives for PLP retrofit. Funding for PLP is supported by contributions from insurers and build back better is the standard for any property after it has experienced flooding.
- **A national community flood resilience fund** supports small scale local action with pooling of **funding and support for volunteers** and a national emergency flood recovery providing resources to support localities that have been overwhelmed.
- Support is available for **micro-Natural Flood Management schemes** from those who are likely to benefit (residents, businesses, insurers, local authorities etc) as well as centralised funding.



- Understanding of **catchment interactions** is increased to better protect infrastructure and communities, including trade-offs with impartial post-event audits and lesson learnt process conducted.
- Understanding of adaptation responses is increased, **avoiding maladaptation**.
- Communities, landowners, councillors are equipped with high quality, up to date information to enable them to engage with authorities on a more equitable footing.



- Communities are helped to set out on a **flood resilience journey** by considering their current and future exposure and the options available to them.
- The potential of flood resilience actions and processes to deliver other **community benefits** (e.g. health and wellbeing) is understood with stronger focus on long-term benefits, as well the short-term more visible interventions.

Relocation

Vision

Relocation, when unavoidable, is integrated into proactive flood resilience management and supported in ways that are fair, and transparent with dedicated funding and resources to support people to move and communities re-establish themselves to build thriving neighbourhoods after relocation.

Desired outcomes

- Honest conversations are being held on where relocation may be necessary and the frameworks (legal, financial, planning etc) are in place to deal with this in a considered way before the issue becomes an emergency.
- We are addressing the reality that some homes may be uninsurable from a flood risk perspective.

Enabling conditions identified through the engagement process



- Scottish Government and public sector leaders are more courageous about managed retreat with **clear relocation policies** to build understanding. **Legislation** gives local governments powers to relocate buildings/people away from highest risk areas with financial support.
- **A national conversation is underway with transparency on relocation and retreat.** There is a managed approach rather than a reaction to large flood events, starting with coastal relocation.
- The concept of **build back better** is a step towards managed retreat.
- Landowners near blue space take responsibility for helping to **reduce impact downstream**, with community support.
- **Incentives** are provided, focusing on what/how people will benefit from relocation.
- A "Relocation Board" with **diverse community members** from across the country is in place to shape policy.
- Residents and businesses understand the need to move away from highest risk areas, councils have specialist training/staffing, and legal frameworks ensure flood prevention measures are a priority, with financial resources.



- **Incentives are provided on moving to new places** focusing on what and how people will benefit from relocation and people are given choices to where they can go.
- **Communities have access to data and rationales** on why decisions on certain locations to be relocated are being made.
- People within localities are provided with **expert science knowledge sessions** to facilitate decisions on local flood issue.



- **Industry and business are part of paying for relocation**, it is not all down to local authorities and Government.
- Funding and resourcing extends beyond physically moving people and expecting them to just make the rest happen.



- **There is understanding of where flooding may happen** and responses in terms of actions for individuals, property level action and an acceptance of an "evolution" towards re-location in some situations.
- **A systems-approach is taken**, acknowledging nature-based solutions have a role and also contribute to biodiversity goals and climate change adaptation.



- **Accessible 'experts'** are available to work with and for the community.
- **Post flood support services** are in place for all (including children) to deal with hidden impacts (i.e. mental health, education disruption).

Cross-cutting enablers

The engagement process identified a number of cross-cutting enabling conditions for a Flood Resilient Scotland

Capacity building

- Climate literacy is increased in relation to adaptation and flood resilience, including sea level rise.
- Flood resilience practitioners are upskilled in community engagement or work with intermediaries.
- There is clarity of roles and responsibilities for all with a stake in flood resilience.
- Training and support is provided at a place level to inform good decisions.

Data sharing

- There is a single location/source for data that is open source and accessible to all.
- There is a wide-scale rollout of RiverTrack, with an app for real time flood warnings.

Collaborative mechanisms

- The culture and structures are in place for collaborative decision-making and long-term investment for adaptation decision making.
- A national centre of expertise for flooding acts as a hub of state-of-art knowledge and understanding of flood management covering hard and soft engineering, natural flood management, nature based approaches, property-level protection, community engagement and emergency responses.
- Academia and practice are better connected and sharing learning in ways that are accessible and informative.
- Knowledge sharing is encouraged across local authority boundaries to increase the consideration of where water will go, and making space in design to let it go there.
- There is a requirement for all Local Planning Authorities and public bodies with major landholdings to have a water vision integrated into their planning process that works at a catchment scale.



Communication

- Messaging and communications have clear, unambiguous and consistent language that creates a better sense of shared objectives.
- Education around flood resilience is incorporated across the curriculum.
- A network of trusted brokers of information and relationship building and mediation is in place across Scotland, allowing communities to access local experts.
- Opportunities exist for sharing stories and lived experience including inclusive ways of engagement through creative practice and consideration of heritage and culture.

Horizon scanning and innovation

- Innovation and digital solutions enhance and support the planning and design of projects with user-friendly AI-based catchment-wide models accessible to all.
- Improved use of modelling and data informs decisions, particularly around intelligent green spaces.
- Increased innovation in the use of materials enables new infrastructure to cope with being underwater for extensive periods.

Behaviour change

- A culture shift encourages a move beyond short-term thinking towards creating thriving places with the need to make space for water.
- Action on the ground results in early wins and increased learning. Pilots are in place that can be upscaled as a way of demonstrating the cumulative value of different approaches. This includes nature-based interventions, wider property level protection and hard/ engineering protection in some places.



Success measures for the Strategy

We found aspirations for a successful strategy to result in the following success measures:

- We are working well together with communities engaged and involved.
- We are reducing existing risk, improving surface water management and adapting to future flood risk.
- Our flood resilience approaches and decisions are fair.
- We are better at recovering after flooding events.
- Our flood resilience measures are adaptive to uncertain future extremes.
- Relocated communities are flourishing.
- Our planning system is helping to reduce flood risk and we are making space for water at the coast.
- We see multiple benefits from creating flood resilient places.



Our reflections

Our findings reflect the fact that our engagement with communities attracted many people who have been flooded, are fearful of being flooded or concerned about local flooding schemes.

We found that a creative approach to thinking about the future (2045) rather than addressing today's problems was helpful. Nonetheless the issues faced by many communities are significant and those who are most likely to be impacted face stark realities with implications being not only physical and economic but affecting health and wellbeing.

Those who took part said they welcomed the opportunity for dialogue, with communities and practitioners coming together in a safe space. We experienced constructive conversations and a desire for greater interaction. Such engagement at a national and local level could form a valuable element of the Flood Resilience Strategy, increasing shared understanding and trust. Introducing ways for communities to talk about their

lived experiences as part of the broader evidence base is beneficial in achieving greater flooding and climate resilience.

We noted that many agencies acknowledge the challenges of joined up policy and delivery, and the expectations placed on them, particularly in relation to land management and use and the role of the planning system and resourcing.

Many of the enablers of change we identified relate to improved mechanisms for working together, as well as the need to think differently about funding mechanisms.

We found a high expectation of what this Flood Resilience Strategy can achieve, and a desire to be kept involved with honest conversations, particularly around relocation.

There is much opportunity for the Flood Resilience Strategy to be brave in how it addresses these challenges.

What happens next

- These outputs from the workshops are helping Scottish Government draft the Flood Resilience Strategy.
- The public consultation on the Flood Resilience Strategy will take place in Spring 2024 and will run for 12 weeks.
- A summary of the consultation responses will be published in summer.
- The Flood Resilience Strategy is scheduled for publication in Autumn 2024.

Who we are



Sniffer is a Scottish sustainability charity that brings people, places, and organisations together to support them respond to the changing climate. We act as a catalyst, fostering collaboration and providing tools to create a fair future where all can flourish. Find out more www.sniffer.org.uk
Scottish Charity No SC022375,
Company No SC149513.



ClimateXChange is Scotland's centre of expertise on climate change. We commission research and analysis to support the Scottish Government as it develops policies on adapting to the changing climate and transitioning to net zero. Find out more: www.climatexchange.org.uk



The Scottish Flood Forum (SFF) is the only organisation dedicated to supporting Scottish communities and individuals who have flooded or are at risk of flooding. The SFF provides grassroots community development support to community resilience groups in flood risk areas across the country. Find out more: www.scottishfloodforum.org
Scottish Charity No. SC043783

We gratefully acknowledge the funding received from Scottish Government to deliver this engagement process.

The information presented in this document represents the findings from the engagement process and does not necessarily represent the views of Sniffer or the project partners. The findings, along with other sources of information, will be used by Scottish Government to inform the Flood Resilience Strategy.



For more information contact info@sniffer.org.uk

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