

New flood warning service for Aberfoyle community

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has today (10 November 2020) launched an innovative new flood warning service – which will warn the residents and road users of a flood-prone street in Aberfoyle when flooding impacts are likely.

Residents and road users encouraged to sign up to receive flood warnings

- The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has launched a new local service, providing early warning of flooding at a known trouble spot in Aberfoyle
- Lochard Road (B829) regularly floods cutting off access to Trossachs National Park and communities west of Aberfoyle; during the most severe events, properties in Aberfoyle can also be directly impacted
- The new service will see warning messages sent when Lochard Road is expected to flood and, if conditions worsen, to warn of potential impacts on nearby properties in Aberfoyle
- The residents of an estimated 640 properties could be impacted by flooding at Lochard Road, including residents in the immediate vicinity and road users
- Register for free and choose to receive notifications via phone call or text.

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has today (10 November 2020) launched an innovative new flood warning service – which will warn the residents and road users of a flood-prone street in Aberfoyle when flooding impacts are likely.

A warning message will be issued when flooding is forecast to impact on Lochard Road, and then again to warn users if impacts on Aberfoyle Main Street and surrounding properties are likely. This new service, which is funded by the Scottish Government, is locally focused and designed specifically for the Aberfoyle area, complementing the existing wider geographical flood alert which already provides early notification of flooding in the Stirlingshire area.

The scheme builds on SEPA's commitment to support Scottish communities to prepare more powerfully for future increased flooding.

Lochard Road is a known problem spot, having endured flooding several times a year, including five severe flooding incidents affecting the main street and properties since 2015. Flooding from the Duchray Water and road surface water can make Lochard Road impassable to vehicles and block access to and from the local primary school. In some circumstances, properties can be flooded, the

main route from Aberfoyle to Kinlochard can be obstructed, and Main Street can suffer impacts. The new service will provide advance warning when flooding is forecasted and, in flash flood situations, offer a small window during which to take action.

The innovative technology deployed by SEPA to provide this new service includes a network of rain gauges and water level monitoring stations transmitting real time data to SEPA's central servers using satellite communication. The real time observed data are combined with forecast rainfall from the Met Office into a state-of-the-art forecasting system which can predict flooding a few hours in advance.

Residents and road users can register to this free service and can choose to receive a notification via phone call or text when flooding is forecast. The message will contain a link which people can follow to determine if the warning is for Lochard Road or extends to properties.

Gail Donald, Flood Adviser at SEPA, said: "We would encourage all of those in the affected area of Aberfoyle, and who travel to the area regularly, to sign up for our warnings for their safety and convenience.

"These warnings are there to help people prepare for flooding incidents and this new service will allow people to consider their travel plans and take appropriate action.

"Extreme weather and rising river levels will only become more common as a result of climate change, so it's vital that communities like Aberfoyle are supported to prepare more effectively for the impacts of flooding."

The scheme has been developed in partnership with Stirling Council, and has had the support of a number of partner organisations.

Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham said: "We know the devastating impact that flooding can have on communities and livelihoods – and we know climate change can make this worse. Being prepared for any flood event is critical if we are to manage the risks and promote long term flood resilience.

"That is why I'm pleased to see the launch of SEPA's flood warning scheme in Aberfoyle. Early alerts of any forecasted flooding will help people living in the area better prepare for and recover from a flood event. In 2020-21, the Scottish Government has made more than £1.6 million available to SEPA to deliver and improve its flood warning schemes.

"Flooding remains of the highest priority to the Scottish Government. This year's Programme for Government committed to invest an extra £150 million for flood risk management in addition to the £42 million provided each year to local authorities through the Local Government Capital Grant. We are also providing £193,000 in 2020-21 to the Scottish Flood Forum who work directly with communities and individuals at risk of flooding."

Cllr Jim Thomson, Environment and Housing Convener at Stirling Council, added: "The delivery of this service is the product of a long-term close

working partnership and has been made possible through a combination of advancing technology and information gathered over a long period by the Council and community, and will bring much needed warning and preparation time for the communities.”

The Scottish Fire and Rescue service has allowed SEPA to install backup communications equipment in Aberfoyle Fire Station to help ensure the real time monitoring system is resilient, which is vital for the service.

SEPA has also worked with Trust for Conservation Volunteers to engage Aberfoyle Primary School children on a science project monitoring rainfall. While the school is currently closed for renovation, in future the flood warnings will enable the school and Local Authority to receive warnings and take any appropriate steps.

SEPA is Scotland’s national flood forecasting, flood warning authority and strategic flood risk management authority. It works in partnership with the Met Office to forecast for flooding and operate Floodline in Scotland to warn the public and emergency responders when flooding is likely.

The latest Flood Warning Service will extend SEPA’s current Floodline service which annually issues on average 300 regional Flood Alerts and 400 local Flood Warnings to more than 31,500 customers nationwide.

In addition to issuing regional Flood Alerts and local Flood Warnings, SEPA’s Floodline provides live flooding information and advice on how to prepare for or cope with the impacts of flooding 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Members of the public can sign up to Floodline to receive free Flood Warning messages direct to their phone, and can register more than one address: property, work or regular travel routes.

People can find out more and sign up at floodlinescotland.org.uk/aberfoyle

ENDS

Notes to editor

SEPA responsibilities

SEPA is Scotland’s national flood forecasting, flood warning authority and strategic flood risk management authority.

- We work in partnership with the Met Office to forecast for flooding and operate Floodline in Scotland to warn the public and emergency responders when flooding is likely;
- We produce Scotland’s Flood Risk Management Strategies;
- We work closely with other organisations responsible for managing flood risk to ensure that a nationally consistent approach to flood risk management is adopted;

- We provide flood risk advice to land use planning in Scotland when requested;
- We raise awareness of flooding at a national level through education initiatives, community engagement and campaigns.

We operate a 24-hour, 365 days a year flood warning service to inform first responders, local authorities and emergency services of emerging flood events and the potential impact on local communities and critical infrastructure.

- All SEPA's Alerts and Warnings are available on our website at floodline.sepa.org.uk/floodupdates/
- Floodline is always the most up-to-date information – with any new flood updates available as soon as they are issued.
- You can also sign up to receive these messages to your phone, for free. You can register online at floodline.sepa.org.uk/floodingsignup/

Local Authority responsibilities

Local authorities are responsible for producing Scotland's first Local Flood Risk Management Plans and work in partnership with SEPA, Scottish Water and other responsible authorities to develop these.

It is the responsibility of the local authority to implement and maintain flood protection actions. Local authorities also inspect, clear and repair watercourses to reduce flood risk and routinely maintain road gullies on public roads and highways.

During severe flooding, local authorities will work with the emergency services and co-ordinate shelter for people evacuated from their homes.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

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