

News from the Scottish Labour Party in the Highlands and Islands

16 June 2008

Flood Protection for Caol Priority

Highlands and Islands Labour Regional MSPs are in Caol today (Monday) to hear the views of locals after receiving a deluge of petitions about flooding.

Peter Peacock, Rhoda Grant and David Stewart wrote to constituents last week and in only a few days the MSPs have received well over 100 responses calling for priority to be given to a flood prevention scheme for the area.

Their visit comes just a few weeks after the Scottish Parliament published a report calling for a series of changes to Government flood protection policy, to better protect coastal communities and those affected by river flooding.

Peter Peacock MSP, who argued for the Parliament's flooding inquiry and served on the Committee making the recommendations, said:

"As a result of climate change we are seeing more and more serious flooding episodes across Scotland and the predictions are these will become more frequent and severe.

"One of the reasons I argued for a flooding inquiry in Parliament was as a result of what people in Caol told me about their awful experience when low pressure, high tides, high wind and rainfall combined to visit a terrible flood on Caol in 2005.

"The previous Scottish Government funded Highland Council to undertake a study and prepare a flood defence scheme and it is now time to deliver that scheme.

"This is an issue which is vitally important to the people of Caol. No one wants to see a repeat of the terrible damage in 2005, when floodwater swept over the shore and into people's houses.

Rhoda Grant MSP said:

"We have had an amazing response to our letter to residents with over 100 households writing to us to register their concern and urging Highland Council to now get on and commission the flood protection works that are necessary.

"Being flooded is a devastating experience for anyone involved and the Parliament is urging the Scottish Government to increase its funding for flooding to protect communities.

David Stewart MSP said:

"We have contacted local people now as we are aware that Highland Council is about to finalise its capital spending for the coming period.

"With the support of local people we have had, we will now be writing to the local authority to urge them to give the flood defences at Caol a very high priority.

"Only last week the Council admitted they had underspent their capital budgets by many millions of pounds and boasted that they had millions more to spend, so lets see a fair whack of that coming to Caol to protect the residents here.

"We will also be writing to the Scottish Government to urge them to fully back Highland Council's efforts and to make sure the people of Caol are never again subjected to flooding."

Ends

web links :

Peter Peacock : www.peterpeacock.org.uk

Rhoda Grant : www.rhodagrants.org.uk

David Stewart : www.davidstewart.org.uk

Highlands and Islands Labour : www.handilabour.org.uk