

News from ...



**Peter Peacock**

Scottish Labour Regional MSP for the Highlands and Islands

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## Parliament recommends Government to change Flood Funding Policy

The Scottish Parliament Rural Affairs and Environment Committee has issued its report on flooding at : <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/rae/reports-08/rur08-02-01.htm>

The Scottish Parliament's Environment Committee has recommended the government needs to change its funding policy to ensure towns like Elgin can get the flood protection they need.

Parliament Environment Committee member and Labour MSP for the Highlands and Islands, Peter Peacock said:

“In the week when Moray Council revealed they were potentially £53 million pounds short of the funding they needed and would have had under previous funding arrangements to protect Elgin and Forres, the news will come as a great relief.”

“The SNP Government recently changed flood funding policy by removing the ring fencing on flood protection money and distributing the national £40million budget between all Scotland's local authorities.

“As a result Moray received a far lower rate of grant than would have been the case under the policy operated by the previous Executive.”

The Rural Affairs Committee, which visited Moray to take evidence on flooding during the inquiry has recommended that;

- Flood funding be increased to meet rising need.

- There should be a long term flood funding strategy.
- That there be a new funding programme which, crucially, would distribute a ring fenced pool of cash held centrally for flood funding on the basis of local need (see para 146 of report)

Peter Peacock continued:

“The recommendations of the Committee were unanimous and represent very good news indeed for Moray, potentially saving them from the dire financial predicament they had as a result of the Scottish Government’s policy.

“The evidence taken in Moray was vital to a whole range of recommendations the Committee has arrived at, from funding policy, to ensuring better management of flooding and significantly improved public information.

“Since the SNP government changed the policy on flood funding I have been campaigning for a change as I knew their policy was bad for Moray and the other communities I represent in the Highlands and Islands.

“I am very pleased the Committee has agreed a need for ring fenced funding and that funding to be better matched to the areas that need it locally, that way Moray and other areas with very high funding needs have a much better chance of having those needs met in full.

“It is now down to the SNP government to accept or reject the recommendations.

“I hope they will accept them in full.

“The Committee has provided them with the means of getting out of the hole they have got themselves into with their rushed change of policy last year.

“I will continue to campaign on this issue until the policy is changed back to one which will benefit communities in the North which have significant and growing flooding issues to contend with.”

Peter Peacock also welcomed other recommendations in the report, saying:

“This is a very thorough piece of work by the Committee and informed by evidence from many people who have experienced flooding and who manage the consequences of it.

“There are a huge number of recommendations, all of which should help ensure people are better protected in future from the rising incidence of flooding as climate change continues to increase and change the pattern of rainfall.”

**Ends**

**Website links**

**Peter Peacock** : [www.peterpeacock.org.uk](http://www.peterpeacock.org.uk)