

# Scotland urged to be prepared for festive season flooding

21 December 2018

As climate change exposes Scotland to rising sea levels and the promise of more frequent extreme weather events, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency is urging businesses and homeowners to be prepared for winter flooding over the festive season.

- Climate change accelerates flood risk from rising rivers, surface water and the sea
- How Ballater pulled together after a battering from Storm Frank
- More than 90% of Scottish adults support Floodline – but almost 70% in flood-prone areas have not considered taking preventative steps for flood control

“Being flooded can be a life-changing event, and with so many Scottish homes and businesses at risk of flooding, especially during the winter months, it’s important to have the appropriate measures in place to protect yourself and your loved ones,” explains Stewart Prodger, from SEPA’s Flooding team.

“Sixty[1] per cent of Scottish homeowners surveyed know it’s their responsibility to protect their own property, and more than half know to contact SEPA for flood warning information. If people are travelling over the festive season and leaving their home empty, it’s more important than ever to be prepared for flooding.”

As Scotland’s national authority for flood forecasting and warning, SEPA operates a 24-hour flood forecasting and 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.

To help everyone be aware and be prepared, SEPA’s free public flood warning service, Floodline, operates 365 days a year. Hundreds of regional Flood Alerts and local Flood Warnings get issued every year and over 27,000 customers nationwide opt to receive these directly, with many thousands more accessing them online.

When Storm Frank hit Scotland around Hogmanay in December 2015, it caused widespread flooding across Scotland. More than 100 flood warnings were issued and SEPA’s 24/7 contact centre received more than 3,300 calls. In Ballater in Aberdeenshire, more than 300 properties were affected when the River Dee burst its banks.

David Cobban and his wife Wendy run the Brakeley Gift Room, a gift shop on Bridge Street in Ballater, which bore the brunt of the flooding.

“We’d only been open for 12 weeks when the flood hit our shop, which is

probably at the lowest point on Bridge Street," Mr Cobban said. "There was already about four feet of water in the shop by the time we arrived in the morning and it wiped out 100% of our stock. So we had to strip everything back to the bare stone and refurbish. Thankfully, my day job is a quantity surveyor in Aberdeen, so I managed to put back everything fairly quickly. But we were still unable to trade for about four months."

With a number of shops around the village closed, the immediate worry was whether local residents and visitors would still come to Ballater.

"Ballater has done a great job," Mr Cobban continues. "It's really been very resilient and the community has really pulled together. It's easy when you're flooded to think – that's the end of your business. But in the cold light of day, the world keeps spinning and you've got to get out and get back trading as quickly as possible. People in the village went out of their way to come to the shop and the local community was really supportive of all the businesses in Ballater. That really helped. There's a lot more liaison now between retailers and businesses in the village and I think we're probably trading better than ever."

The Cobbans signed up for free flood warnings from SEPA's Floodline in the aftermath of Storm Frank and made other winter readiness preparations including fitting flood gates to the three doorways into the shop. These have expanding seals that can be activated to stop water entering through gaps around the door. Ballater also created its own Flood Resilience Group to help alert and support local businesses and residents during times of heightened flood risk.

Stella Potter, a local resident, is a volunteer with the resilience group. Her property had 5 feet of water in the stairwell during the Storm Frank floods.

"I couldn't stay in the house because I had no electricity and no heating," Mrs Potter explained. "So I went to stay with friends who were not in the flood zone until the electricity came back on and I could get some fuel."

Mrs Potter subsequently fitted a flood door to her property and now keeps a grab bag prepared for any emergencies.

"It has my documents, a battery-operated radio, a torch and a sleeping bag," she explains. "I also keep a back-up phone charger and spare mobile phone, and a notebook with various useful numbers like insurance and policy numbers."

SEPA has been working with the Scottish Government, local authorities and other partners to help assess and manage the impact of flooding through the National Flood Risk Assessment (NFRA).

First published in December 2011, the NFRA has provided Scotland with the knowledge and tools to assess the causes and consequences of river, coastal and surface water flooding, taking into account the effects of climate change. It considers the potential impact of flooding on human health,

economic activity, the environment and cultural heritage and is based on the most up to date data available.

The latest assessment estimates there are around 284,000 homes, businesses and services across Scotland at risk of flooding from rivers, surface water and the sea. With advances in technology allowing flood risk data to be gathered in more detail, this figure is more than twice as many as the 108,000 homes, businesses and services identified to be at risk in the 2011 NFRA and 2015 Flood Risk Management Strategies [\[2\]](#).

This is due to major advances in our understanding and science, not because the physical risk has changed. New tools and technology have allowed scientists to more accurately assess flood risk with increased granularity. For example, the latest figures take into account more than just a building's address to gauge its risk factor.

The latest NFRA takes into account large complex sites like universities which, while only having one address, will have multiple buildings or small workshops. In the previous NFRA, this would have been counted as just one property.

Hazard maps have also been updated, with input from local communities, to identify new potentially vulnerable areas.

Climate change will increase the numbers at risk by an additional 110,000 properties by 2080. This equates to 1 in 8 homes and 1 in 5 business and services, up from the 1 in 11 homes and 1 in 7 business and services currently at risk of flooding in Scotland from rivers, surface water and the sea.

"This is our best understanding yet of flood risk in Scotland, with a wider and more detailed national picture than ever before," explains Steve McFarland, in SEPA's Flood Risk Planning and Policy team. "Scientific knowledge and understanding of flood risk is constantly evolving. Better data and access to improved mapping and modelling has advanced our understanding of the location of properties at risk. This means SEPA and its partners are better able to reduce the risk to people, properties, businesses, communities, infrastructure and the environment from the potential impact of future increased flooding."

In a YouGov [\[3\]](#) survey conducted on behalf of SEPA, 91% of Scottish adults feel that Floodline is an important service for flood-prone communities. More than half (53%) of Scottish adults are concerned about more frequent and severe flooding impacting Scotland, rising to 58% amongst those aged 55 and over. But almost 70% (69%) of Scottish adults living in a flood-prone area have not considered putting flood control measures in place over the festive season, such as sandbags, flood gates for properties or installing air brick covers.

"Homeowners, businesses and communities need to recognise their risk, get prepared and take action to help reduce the impact that flooding on their life," SEPA's Stewart Prodger concludes.

Here are five simple things that you can do in advance in case flooding is forecast:

- Be aware: sign up to get SEPA's free Floodline messages direct to your phone for your home and travel areas. Register online at <https://floodline.sepa.org.uk/floodupdates/> or call 0345 988 1188;
- Be prepared: if your home or business is in a flood risk area, make sure you have left it as well flood protected as possible, and if you're away, make sure a neighbour, or a friend or family member, who lives nearby, can easily contact and help you. For a list of flood risk warning areas, visit [floodline.sepa.org.uk/floodupdates/quickdialcodes/](https://floodline.sepa.org.uk/floodupdates/quickdialcodes/);
- Be active: maintain your property by doing simple things like keeping gutters and drains clear of blockages like leaves;
- Be covered: make sure your domestic or business insurance covers flooding;
- Be ready: prepare an [emergency flood kit](#) either to take away with you on holiday or in case you need to leave your home.

The Scottish Government is committed to working to reduce flood risk across Scotland and is investing £420 million over the next ten years to protect homes in many of Scotland's most flood-prone areas.

SEPA currently provides a flood warning service to almost 300 communities across Scotland and this September launched 19 new coastal flood warning areas covering Orkney and Scotland's North East Coast between Aberdeenshire and Montrose in Angus.

## ENDS

[1] Source: SEPA ScotPulse survey, December 2017

[2] The 2015 Flood Risk Management Strategies cover Scotland's 14 local plan districts and were prepared in response to the first National Flood Risk Assessment in 2011.

[3] All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1019 Scottish adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 13th – 17th December 2018. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+)

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**[SEPA calls for nationwide feedback on proposed regulation of finfish aquaculture as consultation deadline](#)**

# approaches

✘ 13 December 2018

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is encouraging anyone interested in shaping the regulation of fish farming in Scotland, to ensure they have their say by Monday, 24 December.

Launched on 7 November, SEPA's seven-week public consultation has been supported by a series of nine public engagement events across Scotland, designed to allow communities, NGOs, industry and public agencies to talk directly with specialist teams and provide direct feedback on our regulatory approach.

With the consultation due to close on Monday, 24 December, the agency is keen to ensure everyone has the opportunity to respond and have their say.

SEPA's proposals to strengthen regulation of the sector, follows 16 months of work by the agency, including a 2017 consultation and one of Scotland's largest and most comprehensive marine research projects into aquaculture, undertaken by SEPA, which found that Scottish salmon farm medicine is significantly impacting local marine environments.

The consultation is also informed by two Scottish Parliamentary committees, one of which concluded that "the status quo is not an option", adding that the industry's expansion goal "will be unsustainable and may cause irrecoverable damage to the environment" unless governance and practices are improved markedly.

SEPA's draft Finfish Aquaculture Sector Plan is ambitious in its aspirations for an industry where in the future:

- The Scottish finfish aquaculture sector recognises that protecting the environment is fundamental to its success and is foremost in all its plans and operations.
- The sector is a world-leading innovator of ways to minimise the environmental footprint of food production and supply.
- The sector has a strong and positive relationship with neighbouring users of the environment and the communities in which it operates. It is valued nationally for its contribution to achieving global food security.

It is also clear that all operators in the sector will reach and maintain full compliance with Scotland's environmental protection laws, with SEPA working to help as many operators as possible to move beyond compliance.

Specifically, SEPA's firm, evidence based proposals for a revised regime that will strengthen the regulation of the sector include:

- **A NEW TIGHTER STANDARD FOR THE ORGANIC WASTE DEPOSITED BY FISH FARMS**

Marine cage fish farming across Scotland operates using open-net cages. Fish faeces; any uneaten food; used fish medicines and other chemical treatments escape from these cages into the marine environment. The heavier, organic particles (the fish faeces and uneaten food) together with any medicines sticking to them are deposited on the sea floor. Natural biological processes then break down and assimilate the material over time.

The tighter standard limits the spatial extent of the mixing zone around farms. The controls we will apply to these mixing zones will bring them into equivalence with modern practice on mixing zones for other waste effluent discharges into the sea, including those from urban waste water.

- **MORE POWERFUL MODELLING USING THE BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE**

The new regulatory framework will use new, more accurate computer modelling approaches that will improve our understanding of the risk to the local environment and allow assessment of the larger-scale impacts including interactions with other farms.

The science about fish farming is very complex and these new approaches will bring the aquaculture sector up to date with the modelling practices which are being used for other industrial sectors where there is a longer history of operation and analysis.

- **ENHANCED ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING & NEW ENFORCEMENT UNIT**

Operators will be required to invest in more accurate monitoring, including of waste coming from fish farms. The creation of a new enforcement unit will strengthen the checking and verifying of monitoring that fish farm operators are required to undertake. SEPA will also increase and strengthen monitoring of the impact of fish farms in surrounding areas.

- **NEW INTERIM APPROACH FOR CONTROLLING THE USE OF EMAMECTIN BENZOATE**

SEPA has asked the UK Technical Advisory Group (UK TAG), a partnership of the UK environment and conservation agencies, to make recommendations on new environmental standards for Emamectin Benzoate to the Scottish Government. UK TAG was established by the governments of the different parts of the UK to oversee the scientific process of developing the environmental standards used across the UK for protecting the water environment.

UK TAG is in the process of developing its recommendations. This includes obtaining and considering independent scientific peer reviews of the evidence. After UK TAG makes its recommendations to the Scottish Government, Scottish Government will consult on draft directions on the establishment of new environmental standards.

While this UK TAG work continues, SEPA will adopt a precautionary principle position which imposes a much tighter interim standard for the use of Emamectin Benzoate at any new site. This is based on the now substantial weight of scientific evidence that the existing standards do not adequately

protect marine life. This interim standard will set a limit so low that it will, effectively, mean Emamectin Benzoate can only be discharged in very limited quantities at any new site.

- **NEW APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE SITING OF FARMS**

The combination of the new standard, the more accurate model and enhanced monitoring will allow the siting of farms in the most appropriate areas where the environment can assimilate wastes. It will also allow SEPA to better match biomass to the capacity available in the environment and continue to assess that through the operation of the site. This may allow for the approval of larger farms than would have been traditionally approved previously, provided they are appropriately sited in sustainable locations.

Overall, the proposals will combine to encourage operators to site and operate their fish farms in environmentally less sensitive waters and use improved practices and technologies to reduce environmental impact.

In practice, we anticipate this will lead to fewer fish farms in shallower, slow-flowing waters and more fish farms in deeper and faster-flowing waters. We also anticipate it will encourage the adoption of new technologies such as partial and full containment to capture organic waste and any remaining medical residues. SEPA has seen some industry operators successfully developing new approaches such as non-chemical ways of managing fish health. Our new regime will support these encouraging developments.

As one of a number of organisations regulating finfish aquaculture, SEPA believes its proposals have the potential to significantly improve in the environmental performance of the industry.

Recognising the diverse range of views of finfish aquaculture, SEPA is keen to hear directly from individuals, interest groups, NGOs, communities, companies and others with a view on the regulatory proposals.

**Terry A'Hearn, Chief Executive of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, said:**

“Public consultation is crucial to help us develop and deliver a new regulatory framework which will protect the marine environment, for the people of Scotland. Our focus is firmly fixed on ensuring we get this right and capture the views of everyone who wants to shape the way we regulate.

“Consequently, across the last sixteen months we’ve done more science, more analysis and more listening than ever before. Our three week, Scotland-wide programme of engagement has provided an invaluable opportunity to interact with local communities on the key issues which matter most to them and hear directly from a diverse range of interests, including NGOs, marine and freshwater fishery groups and representatives of the industry.

“I would strongly encourage anyone with an interest in shaping the way the finfish aquaculture sector is regulated in the future, to have their say by 24 December, via [sectors.sepa.org.uk](http://sectors.sepa.org.uk),”

**ENDS**

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

## **Sector Plans**

SEPA is changing today, creating a world-class environment protection agency fit for the challenges of tomorrow. By moving away from the traditional site by site regulation to grounding our regulation and activities across whole sectors, we will shape our interactions with every sector and the businesses in them.

Sector plans will be at the heart of everything we do and will help regulated businesses operate successfully within the means of one planet. In every sector we regulate, we will have two simple aims.

We will ensure that:

- every regulated business fully meets their compliance obligations
- as many regulated businesses as possible will go beyond the compliance standards.

SEPA has launched a new, dedicated space on its website for sector plans <https://sectors.sepa.org.uk>

## **SEPA's 'Fish Farm Survey Report – Evaluation of a New Seabed Monitoring Approach to Investigate the Impacts of Marine Cage Fish Farms'**

Undertaken by SEPA's specialist marine scientists using the Sir John Murray research vessel, the research project examined environmental impacts from eight Scottish fish farms. 302 chemical samples were analysed from 93 sample stations and 296 ecological samples from 142 sample stations.

Samples for chemical analysis were analysed for the sea lice medicine Emamectin Benzoate (EmBz) and Teflubenzuron (Tef), last used in 2013. The medicines were detected in 98% and 46% of samples respectively, with residues more widely spread in the environment around fish farms than had previously been found. Moreover, the research concluded that the impacts of individual farms may not be contained to the vicinity of individual farms.

The full report is available to view and download from the dedicated consultation space via <https://sectors.sepa.org.uk>.

## **Consultation Events**

Further information on SEPA's Finfish Aquaculture Sector Plan, including community consultation events, is available at <https://sectors.sepa.org.uk>.

\* 'Finfish' are fish with fins as opposed to shellfish. Salmon, rainbow trout



and brown trout are the main species farmed in Scotland. 'Aquaculture' is the cultivation of freshwater or seawater organisms, including finfish or shellfish.

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## [SEPA sets our new plan to drive innovation across Scotland's metals sector](#)

10 December 2018

An action plan to help Scotland's metals sector become an innovative and valued part of Scotland's emerging circular economy, improve environmental compliance and stop illegal activity, has been launched today by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

SEPA's [Metals Sector Plan](#) is one of 16 sector plans being launched this year in line with the regulator's One Planet Prosperity strategy. This reflects that, if everyone in the world lived as we do in Scotland, we would need three planets. There is only one.

In response to mounting scientific evidence about climate change, plastics in our oceans and the pressure on our freshwater environment, the sector plans set out a range of actions to help all regulated businesses meet – and go beyond – their compliance obligations.

"Full compliance with environmental regulations will not, by itself deliver the transformational change required to secure our One Planet Prosperity objectives," says SEPA Chief Executive Terry A'Hearn. "The Metals Sector Plan needs to unlock the potential for businesses to gain strengths in resource efficiency and environmental innovation that will help them to succeed in their markets."

In its Metals Sector Plan, SEPA sets out a series of ambitious goals to help reduce the amount of materials, energy and water used across the metals sector. These include:

- Working with industry to identify innovative opportunities to displace virgin raw materials with recycled or recovered metals.
- Exploring with partners how, across the supply chain, operators can better collect individual metal types and alloys.
- Working with manufacturers and recycling trade associations to understand the implications of changing vehicle technology on end-of-life vehicle depollution and dismantling operators.
- Identifying and sharing opportunities to save energy by promoting industry best practice in energy efficiency and low carbon energy

- projects that can be applied to Scottish metal manufacturing processes.
- Regulating baseline water use at metals production sites and identifying opportunities for water efficiency.

SEPA's Metals Sector Plan cites a [University of Cambridge report](#) stating that the current quality of recycled steel is low, due to poor control of its composition. It is generally down-cycled to intermediate products such as plates, bars and coils of strip with low margins. Much more value is added to steel by businesses that convert these intermediate products into tailored components wanted by final customers.

The University of Cambridge report suggests that new integrated business models could connect liquid steel production to UK architecture, construction, aerospace and automotive industries to find new value and innovation.

Materials separated from metals at reprocessing facilities such as plastics and automotive shredder residue are currently disposed of as waste. There is a significant volume of these materials and operators elsewhere in the UK are investing in processes to extract value from these materials and divert them from landfill.

"Importantly, as the world faces shortages in metals and environmental constraints on their use, we will encourage the development of new technologies and business models that reduce resource use and environmental impact in ways that meet market needs," Mr A'Hearn adds.

Globally scarce metals include copper, lead, tin and lithium – an important component of electric vehicle and renewable energy manufacturing.

SEPA's [One Planet Prosperity](#) regulatory strategy and its [Waste to Resources Framework](#) reflects the Scottish Government's circular economy strategy, [Making Things Last](#), which sets out a framework to dramatically cut waste across the economy and drive the reuse, repair and remanufacture of products.

SEPA's Metals Sector Plan covers all regulated activities that involve the production of metal from raw materials, the manufacture of metal products, and the reprocessing, recycling and recovery of metallic wastes.

On environmental compliance, SEPA said most operators involved in the production of metal and metal products from raw materials had an excellent or good compliance rating. But for licensed and permitted metal recycling and reprocessing sites, compliance in 2017 was 88% – compared to the national average of 90.9%.

"This means that the sector is currently underperforming and that there are a number of operators that consistently perform poorly," SEPA says in its sector plan.

**Key Issues contributing to non-compliance are:**

- Storage of polluted waste on permeable ground
- Non provision of impermeable surface

- Waste data reporting and administration
- Waste duty of care failings
- Failure to de-pollute end-of-life vehicles (ELVs)

End-of-life vehicles contain ferrous, aluminium, lead and copper as well as non-metal contaminants that are classed as hazardous waste. Producer responsibility obligations require the free take-back of ELVs and requires vehicle manufacturers to achieve a 95% recycling and recovery target.

“Metals is a sector with a highly varied environmental performance,” Mr A’Hearn continues. “At one end, there are responsible operators who have a good track record of compliance and are seeking new business opportunities based on solving environmental challenges. At the other end, there are those who undertake activities illegally, ‘outside the system’, creating environmental risks and undermining legitimate operators.

“In the plan, we set out the ways we will try to get these illegal operators into the system or out of the market. This is tough work. We will use a combination of approaches and work with other organisations to try to achieve this aim. We will also drive those legitimate operators with outstanding compliance issues to solve them.”

SEPA says illegal activities in the sector range from small scale breaking of vehicles for reselling parts, to industrial estates where multiple unlicensed end-of-life vehicle (ELV) operations are taking place. Initial assessment suggests that some are involved in wider criminality and a few have links to serious and organised crime groups and are a known violence and aggression risk.

The export of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), ELVs and vehicle parts are also susceptible to illegal activity and there is concern that some operators are still paying cash for metal, which has been banned since 2016, or do not have a Scrap Metal Dealers licence from their local authority. The aim of these requirements was to raise standards within the industry and make it more difficult for metal thieves to convert the proceeds of crime into cash.

SEPA’s proposals to improve compliance and tackle illegal activity in the metals sector include working with industry to:

- Develop effective intervention strategies to disrupt and deter illegal activity in partnership with Police Scotland, local authorities, DVLA, industry trade bodies, other UK environment agencies and other relevant partners.
- Make it easier for operators to understand their obligations through permit simplification and improved guidance on environmental compliance.
- Increase scrutiny of duty of care\* compliance as part of routine site checks.

**Ends**

**Notes to editor**

Read the Metals Sector Plan at: <https://sectors.sepa.org.uk/>

\*Duty of Care is a code of practice set out in environmental law (Section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (as amended)) that legally requires any business, not-for-profit organisation, or public sector body to store and dispose of their waste in a responsible manner.

SEPA is also producing sector plans covering:

- Chemicals Manufacturing
- Crop Production
- Dairy Processing
- Dairy Production
- Finfish Aquaculture
- Forestry and Timber Production and Processing
- Housing
- Landfill
- Leather
- Nuclear
- Oil and Gas Decommissioning
- Scotch Whisky
- Strategic infrastructure (transport and utilities)
- Tyre Sector
- Water and Waste Water Sector

### **About Sector Plans**

All businesses that SEPA regulates in a sector use water, energy and raw materials to produce the products and services they sell. In doing so, they also create waste and emissions. Sector Plans aim to systematically identify the compliance issues that need to be tackled by sector – and help identify the biggest opportunities to support sectors in going beyond compliance.

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## **[Helping Scotland's landfill sector prepare for the future](#)**

 10 December 2018

An ambitious plan to drive environmental compliance at Scotland's landfill sites, harness innovation and help the sector responsibly manage site closures and aftercare – as we transition to a circular economy focused on waste reduction, reuse, recycling and energy recovery – has been launched today by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

[SEPA's Landfill Sector Plan](#) is one of 16 sector plans being launched this year in line with the regulator's One Planet Prosperity strategy. This

reflects that, if everyone in the world lived as we do in Scotland, we would need three planets. There is only one.

In response to mounting scientific evidence about climate change, resource scarcity and security, the sector plans set out a range of actions to help all regulated businesses meet – and go beyond – their compliance obligations.

“This plan is ambitious,” says SEPA Chief Executive Terry A’Hearn. “It spells out how we will use our full suite of regulatory powers, including the creation of a new national enforcement team, in clearer and more powerful ways. It also sets out some new ways such as novel partnerships that we will develop and use to support innovation and transformation in this sector.

“As Scotland’s environmental regulator, we’ll work to ensure operators protect the environment from the impacts of landfilling and ensure that communities are safeguarded. As some wastes break down, they produce powerful emissions such as leachate (a highly polluting liquid that poses a risk to downgrading surface water quality and groundwater aquifers if not adequately contained, extracted and treated) and powerful greenhouse gases such as methane that contribute to climate change.”

There are currently 55 operational landfill sites and 217 non-operational sites regulated by SEPA in Scotland.

Scotland’s landfills provide a waste management solution for the disposal of around 4 million tonnes of waste each year. Over the next three years, SEPA expects to see between 1.3 million to 2 million tonnes of waste a year move from landfill as a result of the Scottish Government’s 2021 ban on the landfilling of biodegradable municipal waste.

Scotland’s globally ambitious circular economy strategy aims to safeguard resources for re-use, recycling and re-manufacturing in Scotland. Doing so will increasingly negate the need for landfill and the Scottish Government’s target is that by 2025, only 5% of waste will be disposed of via landfill.

“The transition to a circular economy is an environmental and economic win-win for Scotland,” Mr A’Hearn adds. “That said, it’s important that we work to ensure operators responsibly manage site closures and aftercare.”

All businesses that SEPA regulates in a sector use water, energy and raw materials to produce the products and services they sell. In doing so, they also create waste and emissions. Sector Plans aim to systematically identify the compliance issues that need to be tackled by sector – and help identify the biggest opportunities to support sectors in going beyond compliance.

In its Landfill Sector Plan, SEPA sets out a number of actions to improve compliance – and to go beyond compliance to help Scotland achieve its circular economy ambitions. These include:

- Focusing regulatory effort, including enforcement interventions, at sites with the worst compliance records and those with greatest community impact.
- Supporting operators to prepare for the ban on landfilling biodegradable

municipal waste from 1 January 2021 and the target of no more than 5% residual waste to landfill by 2025.

- Working with operators to ensure that all extractable landfill gas is utilised or, where this is not technically feasible, converted into less harmful gases.
- Identifying opportunities to help the landfill sector to develop and share best practice examples that support compliant operations.
- Developing effective intervention strategies to disrupt and deter illegal activity in partnership with Police Scotland, local authorities, industry trade bodies, other UK environment agencies and other relevant partners.
- Working with partners to support development of alternative products for landfill engineering, potentially reducing the reliance on virgin quarried clay.
- Developing a forum for businesses to work in partnership with SEPA and other stakeholders to consider the sources of the energy used, with the aim of moving away from fossil fuels.
- Working co-operatively with the landfill sector, communities and other partners to promote and develop sustainable land uses for restored landfills.

## **Ends**

## **Notes to editor**

Read the Landfill Sector Plan at [sectors.sepa.org.uk](https://sectors.sepa.org.uk)

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- Metals
- Nuclear
- Oil and Gas Decommissioning
- Scotch Whisky
- Strategic infrastructure (transport and utilities)
- Tyre Sector
- Water and Waste Water Sector

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# Good VIBES for Scottish businesses supporting sustainable development

📅 15 November 2018

Businesses in Scotland are continuing to step up to increasing environmental challenges and yesterday (14 November) 10 Scottish companies were rewarded for their commitment to sustainability at the VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards.

Those awarded include; Aqualution Systems Ltd, Beyond Green, Clearwater Controls Ltd, Devro (Scotland) Ltd, Hickory, Peel Tech Ltd, Scottish Leather Group Limited, Spruce Carpets Limited, The James Hutton Institute and Xanthella. Aberdeen City Council Countryside Ranger Service and DSM Nutritional Products (UK) Limited also received commendation at the award ceremony held at Radisson Blu in Glasgow and attended by more than 400 business figures.

The announcement follows a rigorous judging process, where each of the 43 finalists were visited by a team of judges to assess their environmental processes.

The 10 businesses awarded, which represent a range of sectors and sizes, demonstrated challenging their everyday working practices to embrace the economic opportunity of sustainability with all reaping the wider associated benefits including increased resource efficiency, resilience, competitiveness as well as a positive working culture.

The businesses were awarded under a range of categories including; management (large and small), circular economy, environmental product or service, hydro nation water innovation, green team, innovation, sustainable and active travel and micro business – highlighting the diverse ways businesses can implement best practice in their daily activity

This included everything from repurposing donated carpet for re-sale to the development of a safe disinfectant which can be used across multiple sectors from farming and food to pharmaceuticals.

The awards also demonstrated how even small changes can have a big difference, for example adopting active travel practices that reduce both reliance on cars and carbon emissions to implementing management programmes that empower staff to make more sustainable choices.

One of the biggest threats to humanity is climate change and in light of this, a Climate Adaptation Award was also introduced this year in partnership with Adaptation Scotland to reward a business that demonstrates managing climate related risks. This was awarded to The James Hutton Institute for its

innovative work on the International Barley Hub, an ambitious development to create a world-leading centre to translate excellence in barley research and innovation into economic, social and environmental benefits. Aberdeen City Council Countryside Ranger Service also received commendation in this category.

Commenting, Bob Downes, chair of SEPA and head of the VIBES judging panel, said: "The VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards celebrate business leadership in sustainable environmental investment, and are an excellent opportunity to recognise and reward companies for going beyond 'business as usual' and driving sustainable growth through innovation.

"The most successful businesses in the future will be those that are not just compliant, but which are also low carbon, low material use, low water use and low waste, and which see environmental excellence as an opportunity. This is at the core of SEPA's One Planet Prosperity regulatory strategy.

"It is very encouraging to see the diverse range of businesses, small and large, which are taking important steps to reduce their impact on the environment and which understand how environmental excellence can also benefit their bottom line. I would like to congratulate each of this year's winning businesses and organisations, and hope that others will be inspired to follow in their footsteps."

Each of the 2018 VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards winners is now eligible to enter the next European Business Awards for the Environment (EBAE) which is open to winners and runners up of RSA Accredited award schemes. VIBES is the only Scottish based RSA Accredited award scheme.

Sponsoring the awards this year was: Adaptation Scotland, Chivas Brothers Pernod Ricard, Climate-KIC through ECCI, Energy Saving Trust, Farne Salmon and Trout, Glenmorangie, Greenvale AP, Mabbett, NetRegs, Scottish Government, ScottishPower, University of Stirling Management School, Vegware and Wave.

For more information on VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards please visit [www.vibes.org.uk](http://www.vibes.org.uk)

– Ends –

#### **Notes to Editors:**

VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards is a strategic partnership between Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Government, Scottish Water, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Zero Waste Scotland, and Energy Saving Trust.

The Awards are further supported by CBI Scotland, the Institute of Directors, the Federation of Small Businesses, Bright Green Business, Quality Scotland and Scottish Council for Development and Industry.

The Awards are accredited by the RSA Environment Awards Accreditation Scheme ([www.rsaaccreditation.org](http://www.rsaaccreditation.org)).



The full list of VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards 2018 winners are as follows:

- **Circular Economy – Sponsored by Chivas Brothers Pernod Riccard:**  
Spruce Carpets Limited (**Winner**)
- **Hydro Nation Water Innovation – Sponsored by Scottish Government:**  
Aqualution Systems Ltd (**Winner**)
- **Sustainable and Active Travel – Sponsored by Energy Saving Trust:**  
Beyond Green (**Winner**)
- **Climate Change Adaptation – Sponsored by Adaptation Scotland:**  
Aberdeen City Council Countryside Ranger Service (**Commendation**)  
The James Hutton Institute (**Winner**)
- **Management SME (under 250 employees) – Sponsored by Stirling University Management School:**  
Hickory (**Winner**)
- **Management Large (over 250 employees) – Sponsored by Glenmorangie:**  
DSM Nutritional Products (UK) Limited (**Commended**)  
Scottish Leather Group Limited (**Winner**)
- **Environmental Product or Service – Sponsored by NetRegs:**  
Clearwater Controls Ltd (**Winner**)
- **Green Team – Sponsored by Wave:**  
Devro (Scotland) Ltd (**Winner**)
- **Innovation – Sponsored by ScottishPower:**  
Xanthella (**Winner**)
- **Micro Business – Sponsored by Climate KIC through ECCI:**  
Peel Tech Ltd (**Winner**)