



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee

Nicole Paterson  
Chief Executive Officer  
Scottish Environment Protection Agency

**8 January 2026**

Dear Nicole,

As part of Committee's annual review of NPF4, it held three meetings, on [3, 17](#) and [24 June 2025](#) in which we took evidence from planning officers, house builders, built environment professionals, architects and community organisations.

As part of Committee's evidence gathering process, we asked how SEPA's flood risk maps and guidance affect the land-use plan making process and development management decision making, particularly how revised flood risk assessments affect the availability of land for housing, especially brownfield sites that tend to be located in town centres and may be prone to flooding.

The Committee also explored the impact that flood risk maps and guidance are having on people already living in areas newly identified as being at risk of flooding and the impact this is having on homeowners, purchasers and the wider community.

Some witnesses argued that SEPA's current approach to flood risk assessment is having a significant negative detrimental impact on development and some homeowners. The Committee is very keen to explore these issues in more detail.

The Committee understands that one of SEPA's roles is to provide information and evidence on the flood risk that exists across the country. It is entirely appropriate that, if such information and evidence on flood risk exists, it is considered in the plan making process and in reaching development management decisions.

To better understand these issues, the Committee requests information on the flood risk assessment process, particularly on any recent changes to the process, their scale and the reasoning behind them.

I would be grateful to receive your response no later than 6th February.

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Contact: Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP. Email [localgov.committee@parliament.scot](mailto:localgov.committee@parliament.scot). We welcome calls through Relay UK and in BSL through Contact Scotland BSL.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Ariane Burgess'.

**Ariane Burgess MSP**  
**Convener**