



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Agriculture and Rural
Development

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Reservoirs Bill: Ligoniel Improvement
Association and Belfast Hills Partnership

25 March 2014

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Reservoirs Bill: Ligoniel Improvement Association and Belfast Hills Partnership

25 March 2014

Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Paul Frew (Chairperson)
Mr Joe Byrne (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Thomas Buchanan
Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson
Mr William Irwin
Mr Ian Milne
Mr Robin Swann

Witnesses:

Dr Jim Bradley	Belfast Hills Partnership
Mr Damien McCallin	Ligoniel Improvement Association

The Chairperson: I welcome Damien McCallin, environment and recreational officer, and Dr Jim Bradley, Belfast Hills Partnership manager. You are very welcome to the Committee, gentlemen, for what is a very important session on the Reservoirs Bill. Jim, I met you at our table at the stakeholder event. I hope that you found it very useful. Damien, I do not think that I have met you yet.

Mr Damien McCallin (Ligoniel Improvement Association): I was in the other group.

The Chairperson: I suspected that. I was probing there more than anything else. I hope that you both found the event very useful and that it prepared you for this presentation. I ask you to take no more than 10 minutes to address the Committee, and then members will ask questions. Without further ado, please continue.

Mr McCallin: First, I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to speak to you and to be involved in the process. I am Damien McCallin, and I am environment and recreation officer for Ligoniel Improvement Association (LIA). With me is Dr Jim Bradley, who is the manager of the Belfast Hills Partnership; he is also an environmental committee member for Ligoniel Improvement Association.

Let me explain a bit about Ligoniel Improvement Association. We are a charitable community organisation founded in 1974 to improve the well-being and environment of the residents of Ligoniel. Our main activities include community development, regeneration work, education, health and well-being, community relations, environmental work, advice and welfare and youth development work. In addition, LIA is the lead partner for the delivery of the government's neighbourhood renewal strategy. The strategy is applicable to those wards across NI that fall into the top 10% of deprived disadvantaged communities. The Ligoniel ward is listed as number 57 for deprivation.

We have provided you with some photographs. Page 1 gives an aerial picture of the four dams in our area. I will give you a brief spiel on who owns each of them. The middle dam — Wolfhill Middle — is owned by Ligoniel Improvement Association. We have a fishing club that uses it, and there are more than 100 members. We believe that the upper and lower dams are owned by O'Kane Limited, which is involved in the ongoing development of housing, and we have a good working relationship with it. Boodle's Dam is at the other side of the Ligoniel Road in Ligoniel Park, which is owned by Belfast City Council.

I will tell you a wee bit about what we are doing at our dam and what is being achieved. We have maintained the dam for more than 10 years since we purchased it. We have set up a cross-community fishing club right on the rural/urban fringe. We have also created and developed a network of connecting footpaths and key facilities, including rural development-programme funded paths and key links to other public seats. Photos 3, 4 and 5 show some of the work recently completed on location. We also have interpretation and heritage panels. You can see an example of that in photo 6. The dams in the mill race are very important to us for landscape, biodiversity, heritage and community development. We have other cross-community projects and events working with local schools on environmental education.

The projects and developments have been funded by a kaleidoscope of funders, including the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Department for Social Development, Belfast Hills Partnership, the rural development programme, landfill tax, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and Belfast City Council, among others. We have plans to further develop the site and the links to other public sites, and we are redeveloping an old corn mill on the site. The plans are with the planners at the minute. The idea is that that will provide an environmental centre that will be a hub for the activities on site and for the groups that use the site.

Dr Jim Bradley (Belfast Hills Partnership): I will talk about Wolfhill Middle in particular. We have been told that it has been classified as high risk, although we do not know because we are not owners of the other sites, but at least two of the dams in the Ligoniel area are also likely to be high risk. A survey was carried out on Wolfhill Middle roughly when Ligoniel Improvement Association purchased the site. That was linked to the housing shown on the aerial photograph. Planning Service had stipulated that a survey needed to be carried out. Some actions were identified and were carried out to Planning Service's satisfaction. Ligoniel Improvement Association has been considering other surveys, particularly when some new DSD paths were being put in last year. Getting grant aid for such survey work is not easy, and Ligoniel Improvement Association and ourselves have, as you can see, experience in working with many different funders. It is more difficult than it might appear to get grant-aid funding, particularly depending on how much we are talking about and what type of work it is for.

We have two or three concerns to point out to the Committee. The annual costs figures indicated to us — £4,500 to £8,000 — will be a millstone around the neck of community groups such as Ligoniel Improvement Association. Those figures are larger than the unrestricted reserve that the LIA has at present, given all its project work. There are future comments and plans about possible grant aid, but that is cold comfort for the likes of Ligoniel Improvement Association. Even if it was in place for the first few years, questions would have to be asked about how long it would be maintained.

A particular issue is the classification of high, middle and low risk and the word "risk". We are not risk-management professionals. We deal with risk management, and our common understanding is that risk is the potential perceived estimated impact of an incident multiplied by the probability of such. If you can lower the probability, you lower the risk. What we believe is being classified here is potential impact. The proposal is that you would nominate a reservoir as being high risk and always high risk, depending on volume, but particularly for housing below a possible inundation route should a dam fail. We regard the use of the word "risk" as extremely difficult. You can imagine the scenario when we are trying to explain to residents that this is nominated as a high risk but that the engineers have said that they are only going to carry out surveys every 10 years, and they are satisfied with the situation. That is difficult to communicate to residents. You could, for instance, have two high-risk reservoirs in an area — one that needed urgent attention and one that did not — but would they both be called high risk? We see that as a problem.

Moreover, many organisations similar to Ligoniel Improvement Association come to look at what has been achieved and what might be possible in their own area. We believe that if the Reservoirs Bill goes through with relatively few changes, we will get fewer such groups. We are also aware that if the Bill were to go through in its present form, our advice would have to be extremely guarded. I ask you to consider what a director on the board of an organisation such as the Ligoniel Improvement

Association would have to bear in mind if such a proposal came to the board. It would be extremely difficult to decide to take on potential liability and what might be potential increasing liability in future.

I will finish by inviting the Committee, as a group or as individuals, to see what is at stake and what is being achieved at Ligoniel and to bear in mind that the Bill will have significant ramifications for areas and developments such as we have in Ligoniel.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much for your presentation and thank you for being so concise and succinct. Robin, I believe that you have to go out.

Mr Swann: I do at 2.30pm, Chair. I have nothing at the minute.

The Chairperson: Nothing on the planning issues?

Mr Swann: No.

Mr Milne: You said that you own the middle one. Have you had any engineers on site looking at the reservoir and giving an opinion on it?

Dr J Bradley: There were engineers up in 2000. URS Infrastructure and Environmental Ltd, previously Ferguson McIlveen LLP, which had performed the surveys, linked in with the paths. It was at that stage that we were investigating the possibility of carrying out another survey before the Reservoirs Bill came into being.

Mr Milne: Did it identify any problems at the time?

Dr J Bradley: No.

Mr Milne: It did not specify any work that needed to be done?

Dr J Bradley: It did not carry out a full survey, but it had no issues.

Mr Milne: The Bill refers to a panel of engineers. These are highly specialised people. To employ them will take a substantial amount of money. I gather from your presentation that that will put a burden on to your group that you will not be fit to meet. Is that right?

Mr McCallin: A huge burden. Big time. As Jim said, if we did not own the dams and we were to be presented with this next year and the Bill was in place, would we sign up to taking it over? Probably not, if it was an added liability. As well as that, a lot of development and educational programmes run on site. Do they suffer because we have to put our money into surveys and the like? Yes. It is a serious concern, and, as Jim said, we do not have much money in reserve.

Dr J Bradley: We have gleaned estimates of what that cost might be. However, given our circumstances and the number of houses below, engineers could say that the actual cost could well be higher. It might be more difficult for them to say that they will inspect only every 10 years. There is then the question of who decides whether that judgement is fair and proper. Will they go for the precautionary principle and say that they need to come up every two years?

The cost is only a rough estimate, but it could be higher, even though there are no indications. We would like to get a survey, but we would like one to show that our dam is in good shape. We do checks weekly in the summer and slightly less frequently in the winter. We already have a regime of maintenance works. That is not the same as a full specialist survey, I grant you, but we can see that the cost could be quite a bit higher.

Mr Buchanan: Given that Ligoniel Improvement Association owns the middle dam, the normal circumstances would be that you are responsible for managing it. Clubs and other associations use it for fishing and water-sports, for example, but there now appears to be some confusion that the person who uses it, not the owner, can be held responsible for its management. How do you see that? Irrespective of who uses it, will you be the sole managers of it or will it fall back on the person who uses it?

Mr McCallin: Irrespective of who uses it, we will be the managers. We have a good working relationship with the groups, who are all made up of local people, so on a community and voluntary basis, we work with them as much as possible.

Dr J Bradley: When fishing club requests are agreed to, it is the association that carries out the work. It is clear that Ligoniel Improvement Association is the manager of the dam.

Mr Buchanan: You have spelled out the implications that the Bill would have for you folk as an organisation should it go forward in its present form. There is no doubt that there is finance regarding engineers and all of that type of thing. What other key issues do you see in the Bill that would need to be changed in order for it keep your club or organisation from going under, if you like, if the Bill went through in its present form?

Dr J Bradley: That is very difficult to answer because it is more about what is missing. I can understand that there is a split between what the Bill intends to do with regard to health and safety and the future development of open water. One of my general concerns is that the positive development that is important not only for the community but for tourism will receive quite a knock from this — not just for community groups, but councils. I can imagine many councils having to take a serious look at areas of open water, reservoirs and dams. My concern is that you would see a significant proportion of open water that is either being used as it exists or has the potential to be used and expanded disappearing in the next few years if the Reservoirs Bill goes through. I know that that does not answer your question directly. However, it is a key point to make.

At the meeting last week there seemed to be confusion about ownership and what might be alleviated or partially removed, and whether getting under the 10,000 cubic metres mark would mean that we were taken out of the system altogether. I have concerns about how the Bill is interpreted and wrong decisions being made. I am particularly concerned about how a community group and a local community will interpret being told that their body of water is a high risk.

The Chairperson: OK. Thank you, Tom. Perhaps I could go through a series of questions. The first, I suppose, relates to the level that defines a controlled reservoir. There are four reservoirs in your area, one of which you are responsible for and the other three you are not. Two of them are owned by O'Kane Limited. I believe that you said they were developers?

Dr J Bradley: Yes.

The Chairperson: That brings a curious mix because you have development, which will change the designation of a reservoir, yet the developers own the reservoir. Have you had any conversations or direct links with O'Kane on the issue?

Dr J Bradley: Not directly on that issue, but they are linked in with the plans for the corn mill, the environment centre and visitor services.

I know that it is not quite what you asked, but the aerial photograph shows that the housing below our dam is fairly new; it has happened in our area in the past 10 or 15 years. Exactly what you are asking about is what would happen if that were repeated in other sites.

The Chairperson: Basically, more development around the site that you are not in control of will lead to a higher designation if you have not already reached that.

Dr J Bradley: Wolfhill Upper is at a much higher level than Wolfhill Middle. If that failed, it would go into our dam and then into our reservoir. Therefore I suppose that there is a joint risk involved from two dams there.

The Chairperson: In the aerial photograph, they all seem to be of differing sizes and scales. Are we sure that there are four reservoirs that meet the correct scale — the 10,000 cubic metres?

Mr McCallin: The middle dam definitely does. I am not sure about the rest of them off the top of my head. I imagine that Wolfhill Lower does not meet the classification.

Dr J Bradley: It is in the audit list.

The Chairperson: OK. Even if it did fall below the 10,000 cubic metres, there are provisions in the Bill to bring it in if it was deemed to be high risk. That is my understanding. Size does not really come into it to that degree in a built-up area.

Dr J Bradley: You will see that there is a cleared area to the right of Wolfhill lower. That is where future development by the owners of Wolfhill lower will happen.

The Chairperson: Yes. You will know your dam pretty well and the surrounding areas and levels, but do you know, or do have the means of finding out, whether Wolfhill middle was ever a natural lake? Do you also know what the differential, for want of a technical word, is between the natural lake and the reservoir water?

Dr J Bradley: We know from old maps that there was no lake there.

The Chairperson: So you are talking about a 100% reservoir.

Dr J Bradley: The natural river is —

Mr McCallin: The Forth river runs behind it.

Dr J Bradley: Yes. The natural river — the Ligoniel river — runs parallel to the main road. Those are all fed from springs further up. That is the whole idea. Wolfhill middle is artificial and always has been.

The Chairperson: In your presentation, you talked about the operating requirements and how they will burden the group. You also said that, if they were in place, the group would have to be consider whether it would purchase it and that you would probably make the decision not to go ahead because of the burden and, I suppose, to a certain degree, the responsibility.

I am sure that you have had a wee dip into the Bill. There is a need for government to try to prevent flooding, damage to property and perhaps even a loss of life. Do you have any idea of how that could be done without this Bill or with a Bill of this nature but just not in such a burdensome way?

Dr J Bradley: One consideration that I had was about how grant aid might be applied, although, as we said in our associated documents, it is not directly related to the Bill. If bodies of water are used for public use, whether for sport or environmental education, perhaps they could be registered in some way — whether we have the Bill or not — and be eligible not for one-off grant aid but for ongoing financial support to meet the costs. That would be one way of doing it.

I fully agree with the need for an approach to ensure that bodies of water such as Wolfhill middle are kept safe.

Mr McCallin: It is about getting a balance between the work that needs to be completed and the value that we get from those open bodies of water. You do not want to lose that because of introducing the Bill for safety reasons. It is about striking a balance between the two.

Dr J Bradley: We have no difficulty with the purpose of the Bill and, in many ways, with the structures proposed. However, our case is a grey area. You need a clear idea about how to approach both if you are to develop and use the resource properly.

The Chairperson: I do not mean, at any stage, to put words in your mouth or to answer a question for you. That is not what I am about. However, what would happen if the additional probability of a failure that Jim mentioned was added in?

If you are a reservoir owner, an engineer may tell you that you need to do work costing so many thousands of pounds as you are high risk. However, if you do that work, you will still be deemed to be high risk. Is there anything in the mechanics of what I have just illustrated that can be done? It looks unfair. Even though you invest money in your dam or reservoir it will still be deemed as high risk. You could invest in the Hoover dam but you would still be high risk, whereas someone down the road may not have invested that money and still be deemed as high risk. How should that be in legislation? How do we get that written down?

Dr J Bradley: An interesting thing that I heard last week at your event was that risk seems to be estimated in other countries for this situation. We are not engineers, but we are interested in that if that is the case. Yes, we find it difficult. It would be interesting to hear from the engineers themselves whether they can judge that the need to survey or carry out mitigation works is based on there being a higher risk than a situation where they say, "No, we do not need to do that work". I find it difficult to combine the two.

In purely layman's terms, and not just for residents but for members of community groups, users, funders and insurers, the word "risk", which I believe is about estimating severity of impact, is really muddying the waters, if you pardon the pun. It also means that it is difficult to explain to people why you are carrying out works that, in theory, do not decrease the risk. That does not seem to fit in with what people would usually expect.

The Chairperson: I do not know whether you dipped into the disputes and appeals mechanism in the Bill, whereby you are designated as a high risk, for instance, and there is an opportunity to appeal a decision and then have a review of it. Did you look at that?

Dr J Bradley: I did. However, we were told unofficially that this is a great example of a high-risk reservoir, again purely for potential impact as opposed to whether there is a high risk of failure in the near future. We looked at that. However, with the current structure and mechanism of high, medium and low risk, and the criteria upon which they are based, it is difficult to see how an appeals process would benefit us.

The Chairperson: There is also a review process if an engineer recommends remedial work. If you disagree with that or think it is too much or exorbitant, there is an appeals mechanism for that also. Did you look at that in any shape or form?

Dr J Bradley: Yes, but when a professional produces a report like that, I do not know whether we could even say that we disagree with it. As you said, these are highly specialised reports, so I would have a concern about that.

The Chairperson: I wonder how a community group would have the capacity even to contest it. You could end up spending more money to contest the findings or recommendations.

Dr J Bradley: The clock would be ticking and we would be looking very quickly for funds to do the work. We would have a choice to make.

The Chairperson: You covered grant aid in your presentation and questions. Last week, one person said, "Do not talk to me about 50% or 75% grant aid. If we are talking thousands of pounds, you are going to put me under." How do you feel about that?

Mr McCallin: Jim pointed that out in the presentation. The estimated cost for one inspection is higher than our reserves. That highlights how serious it could be if we were left with the responsibility of doing that down the line. Whatever grant aid is put in place would need to cover the whole cost for an organisation such as ours. I understand that there are different reservoir owners, but for a community and an organisation with so much social benefit from the site, it would make sense for us not to have any bill at the end.

The Chairperson: The question with regards grant aid is how long it runs. Does it run for ever or is it a snapshot of grant assistance for two, three or five years after the bill or until you have been surveyed for the first time and been given a recommendation of works? How do you feel about that? Should it be ongoing? Would your reservoir benefit from grant aid assistance for one-off remedial works to bring your dam up to a standard? Even though you have a burden going forward of a yearly inspection, you would have had grant assistance to bring your dam up to a certain spec. Would you tentatively support that?

Dr Bradley: I can imagine that it would be possible for major mitigation and improvements that have obvious benefits to be grant-aided. I find it difficult to believe that any of the funding bodies that we have mentioned would take on the smaller running costs per year. It is in their nature to look for additionality and extra impact, so to have a hidden cost that they would fund would be that bit more difficult. It would have to be up to the Departments involved to give a long-term commitment for even those small running costs.

As I said, our costs could be quite a bit higher than that per annum. One-off costs for improvements — of course, depending on how much you are talking about — might be more possible to secure than the smaller running costs. That is what it looks like from our point of view, being a small organisation.

The Chairperson: OK. When Robin goes out the door, we will lose the quorum, so we will have to pause. Freeze everything, as the Dick Tracy cartoon used to say.

Committee suspended.

On resuming —

The Chairperson: Jim, and Damien, I apologise. We ran out of quorum there. We have got it back, so we are able to continue. I am not 100% sure whether I was asking a question or you were answering a question. Nonetheless, we will move on. I have only one or two more questions for you.

What do you know about flood plans? A flood plan will have to be done for each controlled reservoir, if my understanding is correct. What expertise do you currently have for producing a flood plan? Do not confuse that with flood inundation maps. It will still be a flood plan where, if something happens, you will be able to take a course of action for health and safety issues and maybe even to try to lessen the impact. What do you know of a flood plan? Do you have any experience whatsoever on anything like that?

Dr J Bradley: Very little, from a professional or engineering point of view. Between us, we have good knowledge of general risk management and general planning for risk and risk management. Given the proper data and information on this issue, I am sure that we could produce that. It depends to what level that would need to be produced and whether that would need to be approved by engineers, for instance. I am sure that it would be. It depends on what that would mean for costs again.

The Chairperson: Yes. Again, we talk about the costs and burden of the actual work on and maintenance of the reservoir. However, we also have the cost with regard to offences and fines were something to go wrong or you were not to comply. Failure to comply with recommendations in the engineer's report could well mean two years' imprisonment, a fine of £2,500 or both. Does that even get on your Richter scale? Obviously, nobody wants to think about things like that.

Mr McCallin: No, it is the first thing that comes to mind when we were brought in on this; in your head, you go to the worst-case scenario, if you know what I mean. The big concern for any of the board members that we spoke to was what would happen, although they understood the risks involved.

Dr J Bradley: We have read through the entire document. We realise that there are all these particular points, but it is hard for us to get past those early issues and problems of the high risk, the running costs and the additional burden that they give. We understand and see the need for that sort of enforcement. We hope that we would always be in a position to avoid that and seek to achieve all the recommendations. So we understand that it is only right that that should be in place. It obviously has an effect on board members and liability and what is seen as an additional thing to consider if and when you are talking about doing this sort of work.

The Chairperson: We hear in the news of some high-profile cases going to court and what some would say are very lenient penalties being imposed for offences. I am talking about issues such as the welfare of animals and the spectrum of all sorts of crimes and criminality that goes on. Do you think that a possible two years in prison for non-compliance with an engineer's report is proportional?

Dr J Bradley: It is difficult to say. I suppose that it depends on what is seen as being the potential impact. Where you have an entire housing estate below a reservoir, it may seem a bit more proportionate than some of the other situations that we talked about last week, where you might have one person living below that, and it might be the owner.

I would also like you to bear in mind that we are talking from a community group point of view, but we work closely with councils, and not just Belfast City Council. We are aware that these things also weigh on officers' minds. We have Boodles Dam in Ligoniel Park, and, although our concern is focused on Wolfhill Middle, we are also concerned about the others and the effect that that will have on the whole site in general. So, it is difficult to say whether it is proportionate. It has also been

raised, including in the notes on the Bill, how often this has actually happened, but I realise that it takes only one incident or event for the whole perception to change.

The Chairperson: I understand. You are, of course, members of a community group. You are volunteers; you have panels and groups. How much of this is actually on your mindset when you have your meetings, either in Belfast Hills Partnership or an environmental recreation officer within your group, with regard to the Ligoniel Improvement Association? How much of this is bearing down on your group? Is it the topic of every conversation, or is it something that is out there that nobody wants to look at? Are people turning their face away? What is the climate out there at present?

Mr McCallin: Yes, there is concern from an environment and heritage group's perspective. We understand that the issues have to be addressed, but, as Jim said, the risk and likelihood of it happening all have to be balanced up. Yes, everybody is ultra-concerned when they think of the worst-case scenario. However, as we also said, the dam has been in operation for x amount of years and there have not been any issues. A survey that we had done did not throw up any red flags. So, thinking about it pragmatically, it might not be a worst-case scenario, but it could be, and that is the worry for everyone involved.

We want to get it sorted out. This is a big project for us; it is a big part of our work and development for the future. It is a great resource, not only for our organisation but for the local area and others that come into it. So we are concerned. Is it our every thought? Well, with a wife and four kids in the house, no, it would not fit; but it definitely is on the agenda to be discussed. Without having full knowledge of what is going to happen or what the ramifications of the Bill are, you kind of do think about the worst-case scenario. So it is concerning for us, at all levels.

Dr J Bradley: I was aware, at the meeting last week, that there was a lot of talk about the consultations that have been gone through. Having been involved in trying to get messages out to communities in general, I appreciate how difficult that is. I would have to say that there are still members who have not realised the full implications of what is going on here. Those who know can see the problems and start to understand some of the implications. However, it is not the topic that everyone is talking about, compared, for instance, to CAP and areas of natural constraint, for instance. That is just one example of what is perceived as a current major issue. However, we will be reporting this again to the board of the Belfast Hills Partnership and to the Ligoniel Improvement Association. It will come up fairly quickly. However, as often happens in these consultation processes, people arrive late to the game. We can see quite clearly that this raises problems and issues for us. If we do not manage to get our voice heard, it could present us with lots of problems.

The Chairperson: Would you ever contemplate, or are you contemplating, the decommissioning of the dam?

Mr McCallin: Again, it is not as simple as you might think. That is one of the things that come to mind: what if there is a problem with decommissioning? That could run into £500,000 or £1 million.

The Chairperson: If this is a complete artificial reservoir, you may not be able to fully decommission it. Where would the water go?

Mr McCallin: That is the other issue. If you decommission it, as people have been asking, what happens to the water?

Dr J Bradley: I am sure that it could be done, but the cost would be substantial. It may well be that we will be sent away to look at that as one of the options. We will look at them all. However, it would be a disaster for us.

The Chairperson: A get-out clause has been looked at in various other jurisdictions, whereby the Bill would have a get-out clause for third-sector voluntary groups. If you knew that you could not withstand the burden and costs associated with the ramifications of the Bill, a government body, in one guise or another, would come in and take over management. Is something that would be attractive to you?

Dr J Bradley: We would certainly see that as an option, but I think that there is an in-between. The word "grant aid" is the problem. If the word "support" were put in, in a way that was at less of a cost than a full takeover by a government body, that would help. There might be a middle way to do it or

there might not, when you look at the practicalities, but I think that that would be a good option to look at first.

Mr Byrne: I am sorry about, Jim. I am a bit disconnected. What is the capacity of the Wolfhill Middle dam?

Mr McCallin: It is just under 19,000 cubic metres.

Mr Byrne: OK. From the survey that was done last time round, it has been flagged up as a high risk. Is that right?

Mr McCallin: No. We are basing that on the classifications that are suggested for this Bill.

Mr Byrne: From what you have observed and witnessed of operations, would you regard it as high risk?

Mr McCallin: If you are using the fact that there are so many residential houses around it.

Dr J Bradley: Yes, it is purely that.

Mr Byrne: So, the proximity to housing is the danger.

Mr McCallin: Yes.

Dr J Bradley: We do not believe that that is the case, but we would welcome the idea of doing regular surveys. That seems sensible to us.

The Chairperson: Damien and Jim, thank you very much for your time here today. It has been very informative and useful for us as a Committee; I hope you found it of some use. Thank you very much for adding to our evidence on the Reservoirs Bill.