

LANGHOLM

Flood Protection Scheme



SUMMARY OF FIRST COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK

Total number of questionnaires completed: **57**

(96 people attended the event but many filled in questionnaires as a couple. Not all questions were completed in some instances which is why some of the response figures do not always total to 57).

Have you ever been flooded in your current or previous property?

Yes: 0 No: 54

(We were aware that Langholm had not experienced flooding to property but felt it worthwhile to ask the question in case there were any instances of historic floods which had not been recorded).

Do you want to see a Flood Protection Scheme provided in Langholm?

Yes: 53 (95%) No: 3 (5%)

Do you agree with the approach we are taking in developing a scheme?

Yes: 47 (94%) No: 3 (6%)

- I greatly appreciate your consultative approach and the way that you have presented the options and that experts have been available to talk people through them and work with the local community to deliver the scheme.
- I remain unconvinced that we require such drastic measures.
- Too reliant on computer modelling. Lacks empirical data – no rainfall etc.
- Over reaction to 2015 flood.

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Flood Protection Scheme

Would you agree that all the available options to address the flooding have been included and considered

Yes: 50 (94%) **No:** 3 (6%)

- I defer to your expertise!
- You are the experts. Provision of evidence is key.
- Important that options that would not work eg sediment removal have been properly studied.
- Having listened to your representatives I feel everything has been considered.
- Access to river for paddling, swimming, picnics, and walking along river etc to be kept.
- Make sure to protect existing structures e.g. Thomas Telford Bridge.
- Would prefer to see 'up river' use of flood plains. Appreciate this is considered a costly method
- Leave hills in natural conditions and stop commercial forests which in my opinion increase the flow of water off the hills.
- Reservations in regard to sediment management. Visual impact of 1.8m flood wall in Elizabeth Street, glass top may help. As an alternative embankment used and make street one way with parking in front of houses.
- Unsure – not really agreeing that the gravel beds along Elizabeth Street and the meeting of the water are of little impact in the whole flooding consideration. The gravel used to be removed locally on a regular basis but this doesn't happen anymore due to SEPA rules.
- Move gravel in the river bed between George Street and Elizabeth Street.
- I think the removal of gravel would be the best thing.
- I would like to think that the gravel would be removed from the blocked arches at Thomas Telford Bridge and the Church Bridge.
- The huge gravel bank near the Church which has only built up since Storm Desmond should be removed.
- Would like the embankments to be low enough to still see the river.

Thoughts on the visit;

Venue was suitable and well located: **Yes:** 53 (100%) **No:** 0

Staff were helpful and available: **Yes:** 53 (100%) **No:** 0

Plans/boards were well presented and easy to follow: **Yes:** 53 (100%) **No:** 0

Visit was informative and worthwhile: **Yes:** 53 (100%) **No:** 0

Process and options chosen were well explained: **Yes:** 53 (100%) **No:** 0

- Staff were helpful and pleasant.
- I found the font on the boards a little hard to read – dyslexia and eye issues make so much text swim a bit.

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Flood Protection Scheme

Additional comments:

- Thank you for investing in flood defences for Langholm.
- Must be a masonry wall with glass top.
- Strong need to evidence chosen option when decided. You won't please everyone.
- I feel this is a huge expense to guard against something which has historically never happened.
- Feel more scared about living in Elizabeth Street now as all flood maps show this is a priority street for flooding and Dec 2015 was quite a scary experience.
- When considering positive benefits of scheme – spin off economic benefits should be included e.g. free up land for housing/light industrial/recreational use, potentially bring more jobs to Langholm, improve trading conditions for shops, reverse population decline, sustain and enhance school enrolment etc.
- Very re-assured by the current plans – just hope it doesn't take too long to happen.
- Concerns re wildlife. Agree with further investment in Langholm and climate change approach. Insurance review for flood plain area and old mill sites could be developed.
- I agree dredging is not a long term sustainable option.
- I'm always disappointed that more hydro-plants are not put in to slow down flows and provide storage but this is evidently not possible on the Esk.
- Has the proposed development of wind farms been taken into consideration in the plans?
- This investigation process is excellent but it does not take into account the latest story of the potential build of the largest wind farm inland in the country. Vast amounts of top soil and peat will be removed and miles of roads built to every turbine.
- It seems to be a necessary evil so not much good waiting until the disaster happens.
- Main concern is visual impact. Involvement of locals in 'best looking' version may be good.
- Direct defences seem best option with alteration to river channel. Would like to see visual impact lessened with lower wall and more glass and masonry not concrete.

Post event Information to Address the Main Concerns

Sediment Management (Dredging)

In theory the removal of sediment (gravel) from a river channel will increase the capacity however any positive impact will only be seen during low flows. The amount of sediment in the river is negligible compared to the amount of flows during flood/extreme events.

The removal of sediment will generally have a negative environmental impact on the river ecosystem. The cost of this option, compared to its benefit, is also very high. Furthermore, sediment management is an ongoing process. The river will naturally carry and

deposit sediment and so sediment removal would need to be repeated on a regular basis.

Computer modelling shows that the removal of sediment does not offer any significant or long-term benefits on water levels during a flood event.

Reference was made that the river sediment appeared to have increased in recent years. Surveys undertaken in 2011 and 2019, between the Thomas Telford Bridge and the footbridge, revealed that in fact there was no significant change in bed levels between the two surveys.

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Flood Protection Scheme

Post event Information to Address the Main Concerns

Natural Flood Management, Forestry and Upstream Storage

All of these options have been extensively investigated, modelled and costed but none were found to offer sufficient impact on the potential flood levels in Langholm.

Improvements to NFM and forestry practices will continue in future and will add to the overall benefit to mitigate against flood risks. They are however a long term action which could potentially reduce the level of flooding in Langholm during less extreme storm events however at this stage they could not achieve the level of protection required.

Do Nothing

The Project Team received verbal feedback that Langholm had never experienced any flood events which reached residential or business properties. However, predictions show that extreme weather and flooding will increase. The scheme after all is to protect against future events and not the past. A key example we used was that Newton Stewart did not experience any significant flood events until 2012, and then again in 2015.

Wind Farms

Concerns were raised about the possible increase in Flood Risk to Langholm as a result of a proposed wind farm development at Faw Side.

It would be a condition of the development (and any other major developments) that there is no increase in water run-off levels or adverse impact on flooding elsewhere.

Direct Defences (Walls and Embankments)

The direct defences shown at the event were indicative locations and basic construction. There will be further design work undertaken and future consultation on specific locations, heights and possible finishes.

A combination of the different options has been assessed as part of the modelling work. A scheme of direct defences is being taken forward together with 2 other options to reprofile land where the Wauchope meets the Esk and this may help to lower the height of the defences.

Maintaining access to the river, retaining views where possible, and keeping the height of walls as low as possible will all be part of the outline design work which is now being undertaken.

Future Engagement

A further Community Engagement event on the scheme will be held in early 2020.