

Points made in the Objection Letter	Response
<p>I wish to object strongly to this destructive scheme which would not only physically destroy the Esk and Wauchope rivers but also destroy the associated amenities, environment and economic prospects of Langholm at a cost of at least £10 million to the taxpayer. The design is overwhelmingly opposed by the local community, with growing alarm at the enormity of the proposals following the most minimal, and at times opaque engagement from council officers.</p>	<p>It is correct to say the Scheme will have a significant impact on the town but there is no evidence that it will destroy associated amenities, environment, and economic prospects of the town. The social, environmental, and economic impacts have been considered during the development of the Scheme. An Environmental Impact Assessment will also be undertaken prior to publication to assess, in further detail, the social and environmental impacts of the proposed Scheme and offer mitigation as appropriate.</p> <p>Access to the watercourses will be maintained to ensure they can still be used as local amenities. The specifics of this will be assessed at detailed design stage if the Scheme progresses to that stage.</p> <p>With regard to economic prospects, it would be reasonable to assume there may be increased investment (and availability of insurance) into an area where land and property is protected from flooding rather than remaining at risk.</p> <p>All work on the Scheme, from the initial consideration of the 'long list' of options, to the selection of a preferred Scheme, have been undertaken with extensive and comprehensive engagement. The Council has published all information on these events on its website to be fully transparent about the process followed and the decisions taken. The main consultation and appraisal meetings were as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Council meeting in September 2018 setting out the process and overview. • Option Review 1 Meeting in May 2019 which looked at all of the options and took forward the ones which would protect Langholm from flooding. This meeting was attended by SNH, Scottish Water, Local Elected Members, Langholm, Ewes & Westerkirk Community Council with contributions and discussions from SEPA and all other key stakeholders. • Public Engagement 1 was a three day event held in Langholm in June 2019 which presented the outcomes of the Option Review. It was attended by 96 people who left feedback which was considered and responded to. • Option Review 2 Meeting in January 2020 involved attendees as in Option Review 1 and progressed the options to a preferred scheme. • Public Engagement 2 was again a three day event held in Langholm in February 2020 and attended by 208 people with feedback recorded and responded to.
<p>The proposed Langholm flood scheme is unfair, unreasonable, untested, unverified and in fact - dangerous. It also fails the climate change test, that most pressing issue of our times, and amounts to a bonfire of taxpayers' cash.</p> <p>In short, the plans create more problems than they solve. For all these reasons the Langholm scheme must be viewed as not fit for purpose. These claims are evidenced by the following –</p>	<p>The Scheme has been progressed in line with the Flood Risk Management Act (Scotland) 2009 and under all the appropriate national guidelines, standards and procedures. The relevant statutory bodies have been involved throughout the process and deliverables have been reviewed and accepted by the appropriate authority. All supporting documents and findings are published on the project website.</p> <p>The most appropriate standard of protection has been identified in the process of developing the Scheme. The standard of protection is adequate to mitigate the present-day risk of a 0.5%AEP</p>

Points made in the Objection Letter	Response
	<p>event (1:200year return period). The Scheme also incorporates a freeboard which is a safety factor to include for uncertainties.</p> <p>There will be general issues and constraints to overcome if the Scheme progresses to detailed design and construction, as with any construction project. These will be considered with the community at the that time.</p> <p>A wide range of investigations have been undertaken to date, including a ground investigation and utility surveys. At this stage there have been no constraints uncovered that are viewed as insurmountable.</p> <p>The proposed Scheme is the best technical and sustainable solution to mitigate the risk of fluvial flooding to the design standard of protection of 0.5%AEP (1:200year return period).</p>
<p>1. On the consulting engineers own admission the design does not fully reflect climate change predictions so the design is inadequate to protect Langholm against the predicted changes. The increased risk associated with climate change is the justification for this enormous and destructive scheme yet the proposed scheme has not been designed to meet that challenge.</p>	<p>There is no requirement in the legislation to include climate change in the Scheme. The most appropriate standard of protection has been identified in the process of developing the Scheme. The standard of protection is adequate to mitigate the present-day risk of a 0.5%AEP event (1:200year return period). The Scheme also incorporates a freeboard which is a safety factor to include for modelling uncertainties; this is standard practice.</p> <p>Climate change has not been provided as justification for the Scheme. The standard of protection is based on the present-day risk of the 0.5%AEP event (1:200year return period).</p>
<p>2. The Council have apparently completely disregarded their consulting engineers advice that extensive further data should be collected to verify their hydraulic modelling on which the design is based to increase confidence in its accuracy. The consulting engineers make clear they had very limited data and they have simply extrapolated assumptions from anecdotal evidence and data of limited value collected from Canonbie 12.5km downstream. Such disregard for accurate data collection and further analysis has led to numerous inaccuracies which actually increase the current flood risks.</p>	<p>The Hydraulic Analysis report recommends “<i>extensive data collection is undertaken during and after any future flood event, which would provide information to further improve confidence in the hydraulic model.</i>”</p> <p>Gathering additional flood data in the interim period would increase the confidence of the model outputs but the absence of it does not undermine the data used to date. The report also recommends “<i>the model is reviewed and updated prior to the detailed design and construction of a flood protection scheme.</i>” If the Scheme is to progress to detailed design these recommendations would be fully implemented as a matter of course.</p> <p>With regard to the hydrological analysis: The data from the Canonbie gauge was not of ‘<i>limited value</i>’. In fact, as stated in the Hydrological Analysis Report, it ‘<i>is a valuable source of flow information given the fact that it encompasses the study catchment.</i>’ The River Esk is considered well gauged for the purposes of historical flood analysis and design flood flow estimation. The Hydrological Analysis Report explains in great detail how the gauge data was used alongside the most appropriate and robust flood flow estimation methodology.</p> <p>With regard to hydraulic model calibration: The SEPA level gauge on the Thomas Telford bridge, the Canonbie flow gauge and photos during flood events were all used in conjunction to calibrate the model to historic, recorded flood events.</p>

Points made in the Objection Letter	Response
	Both reports are available on the Scheme website.
<p>3. The well known problem of surface water in Langholm has been completely ignored, creating a new flooding risk liable to surcharge the drainage system which could leave many residents flooded with raw sewage, including many more residents who are currently not at any risk from either river or surface water flooding. The probability, frequency and severity risks to life, property and health are significantly increased by the proposed scheme from the huge amounts of surface water and sewage that will pool behind the new walls. Introducing such dangerous new risks deliberately will expose D&G Council to considerable new liability risks.</p>	<p>The issue of surface water has not been ignored but will be further considered at detailed design stage and incorporated into the Scheme if required. The standard method of managing surface water and sewer surcharging behind defences is the installation of underground storage tanks with pumps designed to maintain levels within the sewers network where surcharging does not cause flooding.</p> <p>The proposed Scheme will not increase the risk of other sources of flooding.</p>
<p>4. No detailed construction planning has been undertaken so the scheme costs are liable to escalate substantially especially given the restricted site access through the very narrow streets of Langholm to which the consultant engineers allude. Nor has the disruption to Langholm's residents and key services been taken into account. The liability for ongoing damages and compensation claims is considerable. The consulting engineers originally advised the highest benefit/cost was offered by the much less destructive 1:25 design not this enormously destructive 1:200 design and there is no decision making audit trail or appraisal based justifications for any change from the former to the latter.</p>	<p>A construction cost estimate has been calculated at a number of stages during the development of the Scheme. The industry standard method for calculating a total project cost estimate was followed, with the appropriate level of detail applied for each stage. Preliminary costs are included in the total project cost estimate as a percentage of the construction costs. Preliminary costs include for work required before construction takes place. Examples include the setting up of the site compound area, traffic management and provision of temporary access. The percentage assumed has also been based on factors such as the remoteness of the works, if there are known environmental and technical restrictions or whether it's in a heavily urbanised area.</p> <p>The total project cost estimate also includes a figure for Optimism Bias. Optimism Bias is a contingency sum based on a number of risk components. The Optimism Bias is applied as a percentage of the total of construction costs, enabling and preliminary costs and the operation and maintenance costs.</p> <p>The development of a flood scheme is a process, which increases in the required level of detail as it progresses through the relevant stages. As such some elements of the design will not be progressed until detailed design stage.</p> <p>Disruption during construction will be considered as part of the Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which will form part of the Environmental Impact Assessment.</p> <p>The legislation includes the availability for compensation to affected parties.</p> <p>The rationale and reasoning for the 1:200 design is contained within the published documents on the project webpage. The increase from the 1:25 level was reported to Council Committees in January 2018 and July 2018.</p>

Points made in the Objection Letter	Response
<p>5. Problems in securing finance will leave residents affected by the proposals subject to planning blight and unable to sell their houses for years to come and Langholm as a community will suffer as a whole. D&G Council are currently proposing to secure the significant and wide-ranging statutory powers conferred by an unlimited Flood Order based on unverified data, anecdotal evidence, no options appraisals, no detailed designs and no public consultation, which is wholly unacceptable under this statutory process.</p>	<p>This Scheme has been prioritised by SEPA and both the Council and Scottish Government currently have the finance identified in their respective funding programmes. Langholm has been identified as being within a floodplain. If the flood risk was mitigated by a flood protection scheme, homeowners would be more likely to benefit with regard to home insurance and selling. The re-development of brownfield sites protected by a flood protection scheme is also more likely than without a scheme in place.</p> <p>The hydrological analysis and hydraulic modelling are based on best practice and national guidance. The analysis and modelling used all available data and has been verified and calibrated.</p> <p>An optioneering process, including a baseline Natural Flood Management Assessment, has been carried out following all best practice and guidance. The relevant statutory bodies have been involved throughout all of these processes and the deliverables have been reviewed and accepted by the appropriate authority.</p> <p>An outline design has been carried out to identify the appropriate defence types, sizes, and construction methods have been considered. It would be inappropriate to undertake a detailed design before Confirmation of the Scheme.</p> <p>Consultation has been undertaken as referred to above.</p>
<p>6. There has been no public consultation. The so-called engagement process with the community has been woefully inadequate and have simply been statements of intent. The wider community including most crucially waterside residents have had no voice in the development of the design at all. All they have been given is a limited number of presentations of incomplete information accompanied by distorted and highly misleading graphics. All of which raises the question of how far the standards of good administration have been met.</p>	<p>As above, extensive consultation has been undertaken to date.</p> <p>The proposed Scheme has been designed to mitigate the risk to the 0.5%AEP event, as such if the Scheme goes to Publication the height of the defences will not change. However, if the Scheme progresses to detailed design the residents will have input on the aesthetics of the defences.</p> <p>The virtual tour, plans and visuals were created to enable the residents of the town to visualise what the proposed scheme may look like. It aims to provide an accurate representation of the scale and height of the proposed defences in the context of the surrounding area. It is not an exact replica of the town its properties or features, as they currently exist, and it is not an indicator of changes to street layout or parking arrangements. Every effort has been made to provide as much information as possible and in addition to the virtual tour, and accompanying still images, there are layout plans, height of defences at location, a full 3D presentation, and other background information and documents available to view.</p>