

# Newton Stewart FLOOD PROTECTION SCHEME

## Summary of Public Engagement 1 30 November 2017 to 2 December 2017

### Introduction

**Dumfries and Galloway Council, together with SWECO, are currently working on the design of a flood protection scheme in Newton Stewart. This also includes the design and construction of a replacement for the old Sparling Bridge.**

As part of the project the Council is committed to engaging with the local community which includes public engagement sessions and a regular community newsletter.

The first main public engagement event was held in Newton Stewart from 30 November to 2 December 2017. The event included a number of display boards and plans. Members of the Project Team were on hand to discuss the scheme and answer any questions.

107 people who attended over the three days and many took the time to complete questionnaires and left feedback on the proposals.

The main points taken from this feedback was;

- 100% want to see a Flood Protection Scheme provided in Newton Stewart.
- 86% agreed with the approach we are taking in developing a scheme.
- 77% agreed that all the available options to address the flooding have been included and considered.

This document has been compiled to provide the feedback gathered at the event and to answer all of the main points raised.

### Contents

- Copy of questionnaire
- Feedback from public engagement
- Response to Issues Raised



# The Questionnaire

# Newton Stewart FLOOD PROTECTION SCHEME

## Public Engagement 1 - Questionnaire

1. Please provide your postcode

2. Have you ever been flooded in your current or previous property? *Please tick.*

YES  NO  BUSINESS  HOME

3. Do you want to see a Flood Protection Scheme provided at Newton Stewart?

YES  NO

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

YES  NO  If 'NO' can you please let us know what we could have done better?

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

YES  NO  If 'NO' can you please let us know what additional measures should have been included?

Please turn over



6. Have you been kept up to date with the Project? YES  NO

If 'YES' can you confirm which means of communication you received?

If 'NO' can you advise how you would like to be kept up to date?

7. If you would you like to receive email updates and electronic newsletters please leave us your details;

Email address:

8. Please let us know your thoughts on today's visit;

- Venue was suitable and well located YES  NO
- Staff were helpful and available YES  NO
- Plans/boards were well presented and easy to follow YES  NO
- Visit was informative and worthwhile YES  NO
- Process and Options chosen were well explained YES  NO

Other?

9. Are there any additional comments you wish to make?

**PLEASE LEAVE QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE BOX PROVIDED** (Alternatively please return to the Flood Risk Management Team, Dumfries and Galloway Council, English Street, Dumfries, DG1 2HR)

**Questionnaires to be returned by Friday 15 December. Feedback will be analysed and the results published in January 2018.**

# Feedback

## Total number of questionnaires completed: 57

107 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.

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

Yes: 23

5 advised they had business premises, and 12 residential

No: 33

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## Do you want to see a Flood Protection Scheme provided in Newton Stewart?

Yes: 57 (100%) No: 0

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

Yes: 49 (86%)

I want to say how pleased I am with the information provided. I am very impressed with investigation work carried out.

No: 8 (14%)

- Timing of flows down the 3 main rivers not considered. If one flow could be slowed this impact to town should be significant.
  - We would like to see more involvement with the Forestry Commission to develop upper catchment large volume storage (even over the long term).
  - Sparling Bridge should go back where it was. Footpath from the bridge is too narrow.
  - Once again the pumping station built across the flood plain has been ignored as a cause of the excess flooding which has only occurred since the station was finished in 2012. The only answer we get when this question is raised is it cannot be lowered.
  - Tell Forestry Commission to plant trees without trenches which lead to nearly immediate run off as against slow percolation run off.
  - The scheme to protect the town by widening the A75 bridge capacity will not work as you have a narrow section of river above ie so increased flow cannot be greater than the flow at this point.
  - Area below old bridge on Minnigaff side is narrow part of river. High water last week was eating into the Minnigaff side.
  - If hard defences are to be used in Old Minnigaff they need to extend to bridge over Penkiln. Attention should be given to peninsula between suspension bridge pool and Penkiln Burn otherwise hard defences may be compromised.
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## Would you agree that all the available options to address the flooding have been included and considered?

Yes: 44 (77%)

- They have now.
- It would appear so.
- I am pleased that all options have been looked at. Thanks for consultation.
- Looks good and great to see that the matter is being taken so seriously - good luck and well done D&G Council.

**No: 13 (23%)**

- Would like to see consideration given to lowering height of suspension bridge pool.
  - Upper catchment area needs to be dealt with to review management strategies.
  - River catchment areas needed.
  - Area 100 metres north of Penkiln Bridge needs to be included.
  - I think some of the stones and gravel at Cree Bridge should have been removed.
  - At the moment a flood wall alone seems to be the only option. Has a combination of different solutions been assessed? I also think forestry is a critical element in the catchment because of the extent of cover.
  - Dredging down Wigtown Bay past Creetown to clear silt built up since ships sailed up to collect granite.
  - Would like to see more involvement of Forestry Commission. Remove large gravel berms. General river maintenance.
  - I would expect several options not just one which smacks of 'This is what is going to happen'. This is the cheap option - a dam should be built upstream at Glenhapple Loch or The Ghyll. This proposed solution will not work.
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**Have you been kept up to date with the project?****Yes: 35 No: 18**

(Additional data was also gathered here about the communication methods people would like used which will assist the team in future. Email addresses were also left so we can contact people with updates direct).

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**Thoughts on the visit;****Venue was suitable and well located: Yes: 55 (96%) No: 2 (4%)****Staff were helpful and available: Yes: 56 (98%) No: 1 (2%)****Plans/boards were well presented and easy to follow: Yes: 54 (98%) No: 1 (2%)****Visit was informative and worthwhile: Yes: 55 (98%) No: 1 (2%)****Process and options chosen were well explained: Yes: 55 (98%) No: 1 (2%)****Positive comments:**

- 'Tour' of presentation boards very informative and much appreciated. Thanks.
- Staff were very helpful and took plenty of time explaining the issues and also listened carefully to our concerns.
- Helpful staff to explain the boards.
- Example of proposed new Sparling Bridge aesthetically pleasing.
- Excellent & informative, thanks.
- The helpfulness and explanations were excellent - thank you and well done.
- I will attend further meeting and presentations after this.

**Other comments:**

- Might be an idea to do a shorter version if people don't want to read every single board and direct them to the most pertinent ones.
  - A little too much information
  - They did a good job of pushing a poor scheme that will not work.
  - Only answers I could get were the official line and no one seemed interested in alternatives.
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## Additional comments

- Really miss the Sparling Bridge - impact on tourists and locals.
  - Make scheme resilient to tide.
  - How is river to be accessed and who will be responsible for deploying demountable defences.
  - Sparling Bridge should be a priority as it is a nightmare walking over the main bridge when the road is busy.
  - Would have been good to see that Challoch had been included in the scheme as it is part of Newton Stewart and floods regularly.
  - Walls seem to be the best option and one certainly better than being flooded.
  - Bad flooding occurred in 1960's as hard core replaced gardens ie riverside road and car park - flooding then extended to streets. The history of the Cree needs to be looked at to hopefully succeed with decisions made for plans to be successful.
  - Do hope this happens without delay.
  - You need to go back to the drawing board and look at Dams to allow a progressive flow not the full force of water by tinkering.
  - I feel that all the proposed solutions seem to concentrate on protecting the town bywalls and faster flood release but I feel that these huge peak flows should be reduced much further upstream as the high flood levels could still be a danger to the town (eg damage/destroy the listed Cree Bridge).
  - If walls are to be built it is important to still be able to see river as a tourist attraction and part of the town's visual appeal for both locals and visitors.
  - I realise that walls will be an essential part of the flood defences but I hope they can be kept as low as possible for the look of the town. Possible use of glass and walls?
  - Proposed floodwall stops short of protecting houses in old Minigaff (up to 20 houses). The floodwall is good but should be extended to tie in with the Penkiln Bridge which sits 5m high and provides an impairment in itself. This would save unnecessary objections and delay for the sake of an extra 100m extension. Otherwise floodwall a good idea.
  - Forest could be better managed.
  - I think removing Mill Island, dredging, and better forest management are good options.
  - Could the new bridge provide less obstruction to flow? New location is less convenient. Forest management needs to be held responsible for their part in past floods - mass felling is not acceptable and best practise should be followed.
  - Would like walls to be on both side to protect Mingaff.
  - Need Sparling Bridge in 2018 and flood protection in place as soon as practicable.
  - Impressive amount of work done and timescales are realistic.
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# Responses to Issues raised

Issue Raised	Response
<p><b>Forestry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We would like to see more involvement with the Forestry Commission to develop upper catchment large volume storage (even over the long term).</li> <li>• Tell Forestry Commission to plant trees without trenches which lead to nearly immediate run off as against slow percolation run off.</li> <li>• Upper catchment area needs to be dealt with to review management strategies.</li> <li>• River catchment areas needed.</li> <li>• I think forestry is a critical element in the catchment because of the extent of cover.</li> <li>• Would like to see more involvement of Forestry Commission.</li> <li>• I feel that all the proposed solutions seem to concentrate on protecting the town by walls and faster flood release but I feel that these huge peak flows should be reduced much further upstream as the high flood levels could still be a danger to the town (eg damage/destroy the listed Cree Bridge).</li> <li>• Forest management needs to be held responsible for their part in past floods - mass felling is not acceptable and best practise should be followed.</li> <li>• Forest could be better managed.</li> </ul>	<p>Over 70% of the hydrological catchment (370km<sup>2</sup>) to the north of Newton Stewart is land managed by the Forestry Commission. There are a number of Land Management Plans (LMP) available from the Forestry Commission website, such as the Upper Cree catchment and the Penninghame LMP which is situated directly to the north west of Newton Stewart. These plans outline forest management until 2030, and shows no greater than 10% of the forested area is planned to be felled during any single 5 year window. Felled trees are planned to be replaced by broadleaf trees that may be used in the future for commercial purposes, and have been chosen to promote biodiversity within the catchment. As these broadleaf will be a replacement for those felled, no new areas of drainage are planned for construction and hence no impact on the peak flows over the long-term is expected.</p> <p>Additional provision of new habitat within the LMP's includes the restoration of bog habitats and the provision of wetlands. While the aims of these interventions are primarily to promote biodiversity, their provision will additionally act as Natural Flood Management (NFM) to attenuate small volumes of runoff within the upper catchment.</p> <p>Consultation with the Forestry Commission has taken place through the VM1 and VM2 meetings with additional discussions having taken place ahead of these meetings. Feedback at both VM1 and VM2 stages (short list decision and preferred option decision respectively) from the Forestry Commission was positive regarding the provision of NFM features within the upper catchment and would be open to further discussion on their implementation over the longer term.</p>

Issue Raised	Response
<p><b>Upstream Storage and NFM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timing of flows down the 3 main rivers not considered. If one flow could be slowed this impact to town should be significant.</li> <li>• I would expect several options not just one which smacks of 'This is what is going to happen'. This is the cheap option - a dam should be built upstream at Glenhapple Loch or The Ghyll.</li> <li>• You need to go back to the drawing board and look at Dams to allow a progressive flow not the full force of water by tinkering.</li> </ul>	<p>Extensive consideration was given to these matters from the outset of the scheme with numerous options on upstream storage and NFM being modelled and benefits assessed, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upstream Storage at Glenhapple</li> <li>• Upstream Storage at Linloskin Bridge</li> <li>• Upstream Storage at Frankie Hill</li> <li>• Installation of Obstructions on the River Cree</li> <li>• Installation of Obstructions on Penkiln Burn</li> <li>• Reinstate Flood Storage Area at Water of Minnoch</li> <li>• Upstream Storage at the Ghyll</li> <li>• Upstream Storage on River Cree Tributaries</li> <li>• Natural Flood Management as part of forest management.</li> </ul> <p>None of these options have a positive benefit cost ratio, or had extensive negative impacts, and could therefore not be taken forward to the preferred option stage.</p> <p>A document has been prepared which details how upstream storage and natural flood management techniques are considered (entitled 'Review of Potential Natural Flood Management Techniques 27 November 2017') and a copy will soon be available on the Council's website.</p>
<p><b>Sparling Bridge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sparling Bridge should go back where it was. Footpath from the bridge is too narrow.</li> <li>• Really miss the Sparling Bridge – impact on tourists and locals.</li> <li>• Sparling Bridge should be a priority as it is a nightmare walking over the main bridge when the road is busy.</li> <li>• Could the new bridge provide less obstruction to flow? New location is less convenient.</li> <li>• Need Sparling Bridge in 2018 and flood protection in place as soon as practicable.</li> </ul>	<p>The new Sparling Bridge location was selected as part of an extensive Community Engagement process.</p> <p>The deck level of the new bridge will be much higher (to match the proposed 1 in 200 level for the flood protection scheme).</p> <p>The new bridge is currently at design stage with the programme showing work starting in May 2018 and a new bridge programmed to be in place by August 2018.</p>

Issue Raised	Response
<p><b>Scottish Water Pumping Station</b></p> <p>Once again the pumping station built across the flood plain has been ignored as a cause of the excess flooding which has only occurred since the station was finished in 2012. The only answer we get when this question is raised is it cannot be lowered.</p>	<p>Removal of substantial structures would not be cost effective options and were not therefore included in the scheme. Re-profiling (lowering) of the land near to the station has been considered and may be included in any potential scheme as it may create additional flow capacity and lower the height of direct defences.</p>
<p><b>A75 Bridge</b></p> <p>The scheme to protect the town by widening the A75 bridge capacity will not work as you have a narrow section of river above ie so increased flow cannot be greater than the flow at this point.</p>	<p>The preferred scheme to protect the town is the construction of direct defences. This is to be designed in conjunction with increasing the flow under the A75 and increasing the flow to the section above (beyond the Scottish Water pumping station).</p> <p>Increasing the flow is not a solution in itself but will lower levels in flood events thus enabling the direct defences to be slightly lower.</p>
<p><b>Defences at Minigaff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area below old bridge on Minnigaff side is narrow part of river. High water last week was eating into the Minnigaff side.</li> <li>• If hard defences are to be used in Old Minnigaff they need to extend to bridge over Penkiln. Attention should be given to peninsula between suspension bridge pool and Penkiln Burn otherwise hard defences may be compromised.</li> <li>• Would like to see consideration given to lowering height of suspension bridge pool.</li> <li>• Area 100 metres north of Penkiln Bridge needs to be included.</li> <li>• Proposed floodwall stops short of protecting houses in old Minigaff (up to 20 houses). The floodwall is good but should be extended to tie in with the Penkiln Bridge which sits 5m high and provides an impairment in itself. This would save unnecessary objections and delay for the sake of an extra 100m extension. Otherwise floodwall a good idea.</li> <li>• Would like walls to be on both side to protect Minigaff.</li> </ul>	<p>The next stage of the scheme is to prepare an outline design of the preferred options and to re-run the computer model with this design in place. At this stage there will be opportunity to look into the points raised regarding Minigaff in more detail to see if additional benefits can be gained by altering/ extending the defences.</p>

Issue Raised	Response
<p><b>Dredging</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I think some of the stones and gravel at Cree Bridge should have been removed.</li> <li>Dredging down Wigtown Bay past Creetown to clear silt built up since ships sailed up to collect granite.</li> <li>Remove large gravel berms. General river maintenance.</li> </ul>	<p>A number of options were considered to remove gravel and build-up within the river channel namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removal of Gravel Berm</li> <li>Removal of Mill Island</li> <li>Remove Sediment Around Key Structures</li> <li>Dredging of River</li> </ul> <p>These options were considered and modelled but the results clearly demonstrated that they did not reduce water levels during a flood event and could not therefore be taken forward. Any dredging may also have a detrimental effect on the stability of the Cree Bridge.</p>
<p><b>Other options</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the moment a flood wall alone seems to be the only option. Has a combination of different solutions been assessed?</li> <li>Make scheme resilient to tide.</li> <li>Would have been good to see that Challoch had been included in the scheme as it is part of Newton Stewart and floods regularly.</li> <li>The history of the Cree needs to be looked at to hopefully succeed with decisions made for plans to be successful.</li> </ul>	<p>A combination of the different options has been assessed as part of the modelling work. The preferred scheme (direct defences) is being taken forward together with 2 other options which may help to lower the height of the defences.</p> <p>The scheme has been planned taking into account previous events and will be designed to be resilient to future extreme combinations of river flow and tide.</p>
<p><b>Preferred Scheme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This proposed solution will not work.</li> <li>They did a good job of pushing a poor scheme that will not work. Only answers I could get were the official line and no one seemed interested in alternatives.</li> <li>How is river to be accessed and who will be responsible for deploying demountable defences</li> <li>Walls seem to be the best option and one certainly better than being flooded.</li> <li>If walls are to be built it is important to still be able to see river as a tourist attraction and part of the town's visual appeal for both locals and visitors.</li> <li>I realise that walls will be an essential part of the flood defences but I hope they can be kept as low as possible for the look of the town. Possible use of glass and walls?</li> </ul>	<p>Flood modelling has demonstrated that the proposed solution (direct defences) will protect Newton Stewart from 1 in 200 flood events.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>A further public engagement event will be held in Newton Stewart to allow people the opportunity to comment on the evolving designs.</p>



### **Further information**

If you require further information on the project please go to the Council's website at [www.dumgal.gov.uk](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk)

Alternatively you can email the Project Team at [newtonstewartFPS@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:newtonstewartFPS@dumgal.gov.uk)

Or telephone **030 33 33 3000**.