

Dear East Lothians Councillors

At our meeting on 31 October 2023 at Item 4 you are being asked to agree that further investigation of the potential of Natural Flood Management is in fact deferred until after you have approved the Scheme at your meeting in January 2024. **I hope you will not agree to this** for the following reasons:

1. It is premature in the extreme and removes the possibility of you considering all of the Scheme components, including Natural Flood Management and Nature Based Solutions, you have previously requested at your January meeting.
2. It removes any possibility of your constituents having any open dialogue and collaboration with your officials about this matter which is regarded as so important by at least 2500 of those living in the town.
3. It removes any possibility of a further public exhibition and interaction with townsfolk before your January 2024 decision. I hope you will realise that this is absolutely essential given the many responses to the June 2023 exhibition. In the bye going, you should be demanding the publication of a full report from your officials of the public response to the exhibition so that residents can judge on your behalf whether your consultants are being open and honest as paid contractors to the Council.
4. Also, the recent flood events in other parts of Scotland need to be carefully considered by the Council and by the Scottish Government and SEPA to judge whether the present approach is the most cost effectively beneficial to flood threatened communities. The Council will also need to carefully consider the outcome of the Scottish Government's Review of Flood Resilience Strategy before making final decisions on the Musselburgh Scheme.
5. The report of the visit to the Eddleston project is based on your consultants' interpretation of their visit. It so happens that others, including some Musselburgh residents, were also present as this was a joint visit. The consultants clearly do not believe in collaboration with your constituents as they neither shared their report with us nor entered into discussion about the relevance of the findings to our town.

I look forward to your responses prior to your meeting. I am happy to discuss these points with any of you.

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