

Ask Musselburgh residents now for their view on the Flood Protection Scheme demands Professor Roger Crofts. He discovered after event that East Lothian's Council's Cabinet discussed and approved the preferred design for the Musselburgh Flood Protection Scheme at its meeting on 21 January 2020.

The report to the Cabinet stated that the scheme had been developed "within a consultative framework in partnership with...the people of Musselburgh". This is a surprising claim as the people of Musselburgh have had no chance to be consulted for over 6 months while consultants and officials have worked secretly behind the scenes to complete a design scheme. We have the right as residents to have a full presentation by the Council and their experts on the proposed scheme, be given an opportunity to question the assumptions made and to make suggestions. That is after all what local democracy is about! Not secretive decision making behind affected residents backs. I call on the Council's Cabinet to rescind the Cabinet's decision immediately and allow full public consultation and interaction.

All affected residents will surely want the flood risk to their properties and to the town itself reduced, but the Council must take us with them through a greater consultative approach to arrive at an agreed solution.

There are many questions to be addressed. Why are three bridges to be demolished and access reduced? Why are riverside trees to be removed and amenity reduced? There are also wider questions, for example, about what effective measures are proposed for slowing water runoff from the river catchment downstream: such as tree planting, use of reservoirs and natural floodplains as temporary water stores? What changes to building regulations are proposed to ensure that permeable surfaces are demanded on all new housing and industrial schemes to reduce the speed of water runoff? At the coast, what measures are proposed to provide a natural barrier to the sea and what new physical measures re proposed? Amazingly, none of these questions are addressed in the papers available on the Council's web site. What justification in reducing flood risk to properties and people is there of cost increase from £8.9m to £42.1m?