

Hundreds object to Musselburgh flood protection scheme

Nearly 500 objections to a £54million flood protection scheme have been lodged with East Lothian Council.

The Musselburgh Flood Protection Scheme (MFPS) was formally notified in March this year after councillors rejected calls for it to be paused amid concern it would lose Scottish Government funding.

Now a report to councillors has revealed 470 'valid' objections were recorded, but it said a further 357 responses were ruled invalid with 55 of them rejected because they did not give their address.

Around 140 responses were dismissed because they were duplicates of one already received while other reasons given for not accepting them ranged from late submission to not containing an objection and not being made in writing.



Artists impression shows walls and embankments which will be built as part of the Musselburgh Flood Protection Scheme pic courtesy ELC

The Musselburgh Flood Protection Scheme (MFPS) has sparked controversy in the town after costs soared from the original £8.9m in 2016 to a current estimate of £53.9million.

In January councillors approved the outline design for the scheme which they were told needed to be submitted to Scottish Government by the end of March to qualify for 80 per cent funding in a current cycle of grants.

Opponents of the MFPS, which includes the introduction of high walls through the town centre, wanted it paused claiming not enough work has been carried out to find 'natural solutions' instead of walls. They claimed less than a tenth of the outline design for the scheme uses natural options.

The Musselburgh project aims to protect the town from flooding from the coast and the River Esk which runs through its centre. Current plans include 4.7km of flood walls with 1.7km made up of "flood embankments and hybrid structures".

The report on responses after its submission breaks down the

areas where the objectors live revealing 372 lived in the EH21 postcode but 66 did not live in East Lothian with two not even living in Scotland.

It says: "Musselburgh has a population of circa 21,700 as defined in the 2022 census and the percentage of relevant objectors to this population equates to less than 2 per cent."

The council has written to 'relevant objectors' offering to meet them to discuss their concerns in an attempt to try and persuade them to withdrawn objections.

If despite remaining objections councillors decide to push ahead with the scheme their decision will be sent to Scottish Ministers who will advise them on the next step which could involve holding a public local inquiry or a local hearing.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter