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Dear Mr Martin

Planning Application: SL/2018/0925: Kendal Linear Defences

Following on from our letter (10.01.2019) of support for the original proposals, SLFAP wish to express their further support for the revised submissions and current scheme.

We consider that, given the increased rainfall since the 1961-1990 period and the further increases in rainfall predicted due to climate change, the proposed linear defences are essential for Kendal and the economic, social and mental health benefits far outweigh any negative impacts.

It is true that the linear defences would bring changes to the Kendal townscape, but they are not "totally unacceptable" as has been said. The fine terraces along Aynam Road would be more visible from the Parish Church and Abbot Hall side of the river, with only low planting softening the new wall. In some places the river will be seen only through occasional glass wall sections rather than continuously through railings as Kendalians have been accustomed to.

The change from railings to walls will adversely affect those who drive in cars (e.g. along Aynam Road) whose "eye line" will be low. However, the new paths and landscaped areas on the river side of the walls will be quieter, with less traffic pollution, and provide a significant benefit for those who walk along the new routes. These will be more continuous and extremely attractive to visitors and local people. New footpaths, landscape and woodland on the northern sections of riverside will also benefit many residents.

The benefits to those residents and businesses at risk of flooding are immense.

SLFAP members are very clear, having examined the issues more closely than most objectors, that :

- a) there is no alternative to the balanced scheme the Environment Agency's engineers have devised;
- b) the phasing, with linear defences first, Burnside protection second; and upstream storage and Stock Beck measures third is the only feasible solution given government funding issues; and

c) that even though some areas would still flood in extreme storms like Storm Desmond the depth and velocity of “out of river” flows would be much less. So, although intense and long storms like Desmond will become more frequent than the 1:200 estimation, the risk to life and wellbeing would be contained and our town remain a good place to live.

We believe that, in all conscience, no member of the Planning Committee should vote against this planning application unless they have a scientifically tested alternative solution that South Lakeland District Council (SLDC) can make happen in the next 5 years.

However, we also want to make it very clear that constructing the linear defences with its new tree planting is not a panacea that allows our planners and decision makers to think that flood risk in Kendal is “sorted” and development can continue on a “business as usual” basis. Clearly Phase 2 and 3 need to be approved and constructed as quickly as possible, but SLDC also needs to do five things.

- 1) Stop any building in the known or predicted flood plain,
- 2) Stop and reverse impermeable surfacing of the ground that increases surface water flooding,
- 3) Stop building on, and increased drainage of, boggy hollows above and around the town which reduces natural flood storage capacity,
- 4) Start a programme of tree planting so that new semi mature trees will be ready when/if disease or age means existing trees need to be felled. This needs to apply to public and privately owned land, and
- 5) Engage actively with the Lake District National Park and World Heritage Site to ensure that natural flood measures are introduced to reduce the speed of rainfall run-off from the upper catchment.

Many early objections proposed one or more of the 5 actions above as an ALTERNATIVE to the Linear Defences. Examination of the available data and research shows that, for the most extreme storms, they are needed IN ADDITION to the Environment Agency flood protection proposals, with all 3 phases. These are designed to give us 1:100 (plus climate change) protection for a limited period. Our national government will not fund anything better, but that is no reason at all to refuse what is available. Radical and imaginative action (as listed above) could give Kendal and the Kent valley a higher level of protection, which stands a good chance of protecting us for longer.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Maggie Mason: BA (Arch) Dip TP
On behalf of South Lakes Flood Action Partnership