

## Preferred flood protection scheme for Hawick approved

Scottish Borders Council has today approved a preferred flood protection scheme for Hawick and gave authority for it to progress to the next design stages.

The scheme is the project team's proposal on the best combination of flood protection options to protect Hawick against a major flood event, with a total cost currently estimated at £27.9 million.

The scheme was determined through a formal option appraisal process. This process was managed by the Council's design consultant Halcrow Group Limited and included meetings with key stakeholders and a two day public exhibition in Hawick to which local people were invited.

The scheme will provide a major increase in flood protection for Hawick and has been designed to provide a level of protection against the 1 in 75 year flood event which will protect 915 residential and commercial properties. This level of protection has been determined to be the maximum level of flood protection that can be delivered without building walls of an unacceptable height, which would sever the town from its river and present social, environmental and cultural heritage issues.

Councillor Gordon Edgar, Executive Member for Roads and Infrastructure, welcomed today's decision: "I am pleased that the preferred flood protection scheme is now approved and that we can progress to the next stages. The scheme will provide a number of benefits to the people of Hawick, including greater confidence for those living in the areas that flood, the potential to unlock development in business areas, a reduction in insurance premiums for homes and businesses, and the protection of the essential infrastructure of the town."

The scheme will next progress to stage 4: outline design. This will involve undertaking detailed surveys and further consultation, including a second public exhibition. It is appreciated that many people have not yet been spoken to directly about the proposals. They will be contacted during this stage 4, which is estimated to last around 15 months.

Once stage 4 is complete, stage 5 puts the scheme through a statutory approvals process. This is a key stage for the scheme and, once approved, the scheme would then be eligible to bid for Scottish Government funding. It is estimated that this stage will take a minimum of seven months. The scheme will be approved under the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009.

### Notes to Editors

1. In June 2009 the Scottish Government's Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 received Royal Assent, superseding the outdated Flood Prevention (Scotland) Act 1961. The 2009 Act incorporates ambitions to transform the way local authorities design flood protection schemes, with SEPA tasked with providing a strategic oversight in flood risk management. This, in

combination with the new tools for local authorities aims to ensure that the next generation delivers flood protection and does so through sustainable flood risk management and in an environmentally acceptable way.

2. The 1 in 75 year flood event is the flood event that, statistically, has a 1 in 75 (or 1.33%) chance of happening in any year. This probability is related to the flow in the river. It does not mean that the flood will happen once every two hundred years; it could happen twice in the space of a month or not for 500 years.
3. The Hawick flood event from October 2005 was a 1 in 50 year flood event.
4. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) recently published the first National Flood Risk Assessment for Scotland which estimates that just over 125,000 properties are at risk of flooding in Scotland. This represents one in 22 of all residential properties and one in 13 of all non-residential properties. For many of these properties it will never be possible to fully remove the risk of flooding.
5. Additional information on the scheme is available through the scheme's website at [www.hawickfloodscheme.com](http://www.hawickfloodscheme.com).

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