

South Cumbria Rivers Trust (SCRT) works in collaboration with the Environment Agency (EA) and Natural England (NE) to identify, scope and deliver work that benefits the special nature of the River Kent. The River Kent and its tributaries are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

BOWSTON WEIR REMOVAL PROPOSAL: SCRT Statement – Local Community Engagement Plan



BOWSTON UPDATE

ISSUE DATE: Tuesday 24th November 2020

SCRT has recently received feedback from some stakeholders who have raised comments in respect of the Bowston weir removal process as it applies to the Local Community Engagement Plan (LCEP).

For transparency purposes, we want to clarify SCRT's position and hopefully alleviate any misunderstanding that may have occurred.

Firstly, the LCEP and the provisions it contains to aid understanding and openness of the weir removal proposal is very important to us. The joint nature of its development between the community and SCRT is of high value and we have taken great care to meet the requirements of this important document, within the obvious constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through lodging the Bowston weir removal planning application with South Lakeland District Council (SLDC) in November, following permission from the weir owners in October to do so, SCRT were progressing to the "Medium-term achievements (During formal consultation phase/s)" stage of the LCEP. Please note that it has always been our declared intention to move to the "formal" stage once we had achieved the short-term achievements of the LCEP and were in receipt of the structure owners' agreement to the weir removal. This was communicated to members of the stakeholder group via an earlier Bowston Question & Answer update published on the SCRT website on 30th July 2019; 'If we gain the permissions we seek, we will then make a South Lakeland District Council Planning Application. This is the formal stage and there will be a public notice. You will have an opportunity through this to lodge your own formal statement.'

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SCRT are a charitable, not for profit organisation who always engage with the public on an informal basis; that is, we are not regulators or an “authority” to whom there is a statutory or ‘formal’ obligation to consult, for example, a SLDC planning application. It was our understanding that this was a clear distinction.

However, it is now clear that the terms “formal” and “prior to formal” within the LCEP have led to confusion. It is regrettable that this has occurred and with hindsight a much clearer definition of these terms and the phases they represent should have been included in the LCEP. We hope that this explanation will at the least help to demonstrate that SCRT’s decision to progress to the formal planning phase was taken with our understanding of the agreed process within the LCEP.

As you are aware from this and other recent updates, the SLDC planning application for the Bowston weir removal proposal has now been lodged. There is additional impetus for SCRT to progress to the formal stages due to delays which may be encountered through existing or new pandemic impacts over the coming weeks and months. Funding for this work has been successfully retained in another carry over to summer 2021 but will disappear thereafter.

We will continue to update all interested parties with new developments and relevant information as soon as possible, via e-mail and on our website.

The meeting notes from the special interest group meeting held on Monday 16th November 2020 are now available on our website: <https://scrt.co.uk/what-we-do/current-projects/bowston/>

Regards,

The SCRT Team

CONTACT US

Please contact us at admin@scrt.co.uk if you have any questions and we will do our best to answer them as soon as possible.

All information and updates to date can be found on our website: <https://scrt.co.uk/what-we-do/current-projects/bowston>