

Chichester District Council

CABINET

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Selsey Coastal Scheme – Next Stage Plan

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendation

That Cabinet recommends to Council:-

- 2.1 Approval of the Project Initiation Document (Appendix 1).**
- 2.2 Approval of submission of a business case to the Environment Agency for Grant in Aid (GiA) funding of the option appraisal & outline design stage of scheme development.**
- 2.3 Approval for undertaking the next stage of scheme development (option appraisal and outline design), if GiA funding is secured.**
- 2.4 To note the significant funding gap anticipated and undertake to explore funding options towards any future construction stage, including a supporting letter to the Environment Agency in order to address the funding gap and enable a scheme at Selsey. (para 5.3)**
- 2.5 That delegated authority is given to the Director of Planning and Environment, in consultation with the Director of Corporate Services, for the Grant in Aid funding spend and appointment of professional services for the Selsey scheme, and to agree project financial tolerances and spend with the delivery team. (Para 5.1, 5.5 & 5.6)**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Selsey peninsula is an exposed coastline with a long history of managing coastal flood and erosion risk. Coastal defences reduce the risk of coastal flooding and erosion to the town of Selsey. Many of the defences were constructed in the 1950's

and have reached, or are reaching, the end of their design life. At the same time, because of climate change (specifically sea level rise) the level of protection afforded by the existing defences is decreasing.

- 3.2 Over 700 properties are at significant tidal flood risk, present day. This increases over the next 100 years with climate change to around 1300 properties at risk. Approximately 1000 properties are also predicted to be at risk from erosion over the next 100 years.
- 3.3 The Council has adopted the North Solent and South Downs Shoreline Management Plans and the Pagham to East Head Coastal Defence Strategy (2009) for this frontage, which considered these risks and recommended a Hold-the-Line coastal management policy. The strategy recognised the need to manage coastal erosion and flood risk along the Selsey frontage, its aging defences, but also its low priority for national funding for replacement defences, at the time.
- 3.4 Following the strategy, a programme of beach management has been in place to decrease wave energy and extend the life of the existing defences. This has been hugely successful in prolonging the life of these defences and reducing the risk of undermining of the existing structures. However, as we have seen with recent emergency failures this is becoming increasingly challenging in isolation as the structures continue to age.
- 3.5 Since the strategy there have been changes in guidance, evidence to support understanding and a change in the funding approach for flood and erosion risk management projects. A feasibility assessment was needed to move forward our understanding and review the risks, the economic damages and benefits, and scheme viability and funding.
- 3.6 The feasibility assessment has identified:
 - Increased benefits of implementing a scheme (since the 2009 strategy).
 - That flood defence Grant in Aid (GiA) is likely to be available to part fund a flood and erosion risk management scheme at Selsey (under current funding rules).
 - That a significant financial contribution is likely to be required, towards construction.
 - That there are challenges ahead with the sustainability of defences along this coastline due to climate change, and consideration of adaptation to future change will need to be part of any scheme development moving forward.
 - That securing any GiA funding will be subject to demonstrating a robust business case and national GiA availability in the Environment Agency's Capital Investment Plan. Progression through a number of assurance gateways will be required for a £multi-million scheme of this scale, with no guarantees of funding availability at any stage.

The assessment is based on high level costing and benefits which will evolve and will need to be refined as any scheme develops.

- 3.7 This report sets out the proposed next steps for progressing a coastal scheme at Selsey following this feasibility assessment.

4. Outcomes to be Achieved

- 4.1 To bid for GiA funding to undertake the next stage of development of a coastal flood and erosion risk management scheme at Selsey.
- 4.2 If funding is secured, to develop scheme options and outline designs that would reduce the risk of coastal flooding and erosion to Selsey and prepare the Outline Business case to support Environment Agency assurance and future funding bids.

5. Proposal

- 5.1 That the Council makes an application to the Environment Agency for GiA Funding to undertake the next stage of scheme development – Option appraisal & Outline Design. Estimated cost ~£3.9 million (including risk).
- 5.2 If funding is secured that the Council undertake the Option appraisal & Outline Design for a coastal scheme at Selsey.
- 5.3 That the Council recognise the significant funding gap anticipated and endeavour to work towards closing the funding gap.
- 5.4 The next stage of option appraisal and outline design is an estimated programme of 3.5 years.
- 5.5 The scheme development will be managed by the Council's coastal team (Coastal Partners), and a main consultant will be procured to undertake technical work packages. The estimated value of the main professional services contract for the options appraisal and outline design is £800k - £1.1m. To aid continuity of design, this contract is likely to allow for extension to enable continuation with detailed design and construction design support. Undertaking detailed design and construction will be subject to further funding. The estimated value for both the options appraisal/outline design, and the design stage & construction design support is ~£5.5m. Professional services will also be required to undertake site investigations & studies. The total estimated value of external professional services is ~£1.3m for the option appraisal and outline design stage.
- 5.6 It is vital for the efficient management of the project to agree pre-approved financial tolerances, to ensure timely decision making and robust contract management throughout. It is proposed that authority for agreement and review of these tolerances is delegated to the Director of Planning & Environment, in consultation with the Director of Corporate Services, to ensure they are kept live and relevant.
- 5.7 A capital scheme of this scale has a number of gateway stages to secure funding and there are no guarantees of funding availability at any stage. Further stages of development include detailed design, licensing & consents, and construction. At this early stage it is anticipated to be at least 6 years before construction if funding can be secured at each gateway.

6. Alternatives Considered

- 6.1 Do nothing – If nothing was done to maintain the existing assets they will continue to age and will face increasing risk of failure. At the same time, with sea level rise, the

level of protection afforded by the existing defences will decrease. This option would not manage the risk of flooding and erosion along this frontage.

- 6.2 Continue present management - Under this option management of the frontage would continue by undertaking risk-based inspections and maintenance of defences where appropriate. Beach management would be undertaken, subject to funding & approvals. This option would not address the reducing standard of protection, increasing impacts of climate change, and the likely increase in pressure on adhoc emergency work without any longer-term plans in place. The routine repair and maintenance of coastal defences has become more frequent, as well as increasingly complex and costly, as the defences age.

7. Resource and Legal Implications

- 7.1 The council, as the coast protection authority, is not legally required to do anything to protect against flooding and erosion, however it has permissive powers to carry out works.
- 7.2 Any future works will be carried out under the Land Drainage Act 1991, or Coast Protection Act 1949, where the Council has permissive powers to act in the public interest; doing so only when; there is a clear economic benefit, an appropriate engineering solution can be achieved, and there is no contravention of environmental legislation and funds available.
- 7.3 The Project Initiation Document (Appendix 1) illustrates the governance, responsibilities, and accountabilities, including the performance monitoring cycle for the project.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 This matter was reported to the Environment Panel on 14 December where the recommendations in this report were endorsed. Selsey Town Council were invited to attend the Panel meeting.
- 8.2 Consultation will form a key part of the option appraisal stage, engaging with the local community, businesses, and public bodies with an interest in the Selsey coastline.

9. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

- 9.1 Taking the next step to look at options and outline designs on this frontage will increase the understanding of the longer-term management of this frontage and move forward the development of a scheme.
- 9.2 There are however a number of risks and challenges to the journey of delivering a capital scheme as set out below:
- Application for next stage of scheme development is not approved by Environment Agency and funding not secured (or not approved at later stage).
 - Scheme development takes longer to get to construction. With aging defences there is a risk of extensive costs in extending life of existing structures or failure of defences.
 - Significant contribution expected to be required and there is a risk the funding gap cannot be met.

- High level scheme costs increase significantly once there is more understanding of the defence options, making the funding gap more significant and challenging to achieve.
- Risk of raising expectations - there are a number of stages and funding gateways to scheme development of this scale. Increased understanding is gained through each development stage and there are no guarantees of funding being secured for construction.
- Sustainability of defences into the future, and readiness for change. This will need to form part of the options considered.

10. Other Implications

	Yes	No
Crime and Disorder		X
Biodiversity and Climate Change Mitigation It is as a result of climate change (specifically sea level rise and increased storminess) that the level of protection afforded by the existing defences will decrease over time and a new defence scheme needs to be appraised. Option appraisal of a coastal scheme in itself has no positive or negative impact on climate change or biodiversity. However, the impact of climate change, and on biodiversity (including net gain considerations, and carbon impacts) will form part of the option appraisal work proposed.	X	
Human Rights and Equality Impact		X
Safeguarding and Early Help		X
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)		X
Health and Wellbeing		X

11. Appendices

11.1 Project Initiation Document – Selsey Defence Scheme

12. Background Papers

12.1 Position Statement – Flood and Erosion Risks and Responsibilities in Managing Selseys Aging Seawalls. Cabinet, 10 Oct 2023

12.2 Selsey Flood and Coastal Scheme Feasibility Report. Cabinet, 6 July 2021

12.3 Adoption of North Solent Shoreline Management Plan (SMP), Executive Board, 2 November 2010

12.4 Adoption of South Downs Shoreline Management Plan, Executive Board, 10 Jan 2006

12.5 Adoption of “Pagham to East Head Coastal Defence Strategy”. Council, 25 November 2008