

SMT briefing on Blue Anchor Wall

There are existing sea defences at Blue Anchor where the ownership is unknown. These are shown in picture one and are a mixture of walls from the 1920's and 1980's.

The angled slabs are sat on an upright concrete wall and during a site visit with the Environment Agency on Tuesday 2nd June two holes were found at the base of the upright sections.

The visible hole in picture two appears to be small but on inspection from above a large void can be seen to run from the top of the structure to the hole. Void shown in picture three.

The second of the holes is larger, picture four, and it is assumed that the void runs through the rear of the structure to this hole. Only entry into the void would confirm this which we did not do.

The Environment Agency's Area Flood Risk Manager and I both consider that an emergency repair is needed to prevent failure of the existing asset and a collapse of the land behind it. To the rear is the hotel at c10m and the road at c20m distant.

The EA have directed us to bid for the money necessary for the repair but in order to meet their criteria we must recognise this as an emergency and repair it now. If we were to wait until our bid is assessed then they would argue it was not an emergency and therefore cannot be funded. In making this point I am acting on the advice of the EA officer with whom I have built a long standing relationship, and trust.

I propose that SMT support the delivery of the repair using the council emergency powers, at risk but with a concurrent bid to the EA for emergency works funding. The value of the works is estimated as being £100k - £200k. If the bid is approved we would anticipate that the whole cost is recoverable.

The EA haven't confirmed a timeline for bid consideration but it appears to be a case by case basis rather than a formal timeline. My expectation is that any funds agreed would be provided within this financial year.

It is important to note that this is an at risk request and whilst early indications are that the EA would support the funding they will offer no assurance until the bid is assessed, post works completion. It is therefore possible that the bid is unsuccessful and that the council have to stand the entire cost of the works.

The importance of this wall cannot be overstated, its loss would lead to a sudden failure of the cliff and advice from another Agency officer is that the erosion will exceed the point that erosion over time would have created had the wall not been there, i.e. it would be sudden and more damaging.

Somerset County Council have reviewed options for their road and concluded that a protection scheme would be the most cost effective solution. Their

recommendation for this section of road assumes that the existing structure is in place. You might therefore suggest that SCC have the greatest interest in this asset but they do not have the power to deliver a repair on an asset they do not own. We as the Coastal Protection Authority however do, as set out in the Coastal Protection Act.

If SMT approve this, we will source a contractor from the framework and move quickly to the delivery of the scheme, which will involve closing the visible holes and pumping concrete to fill the void.

I would also seek advice on best way to achieve retrospective approval / support from Members.

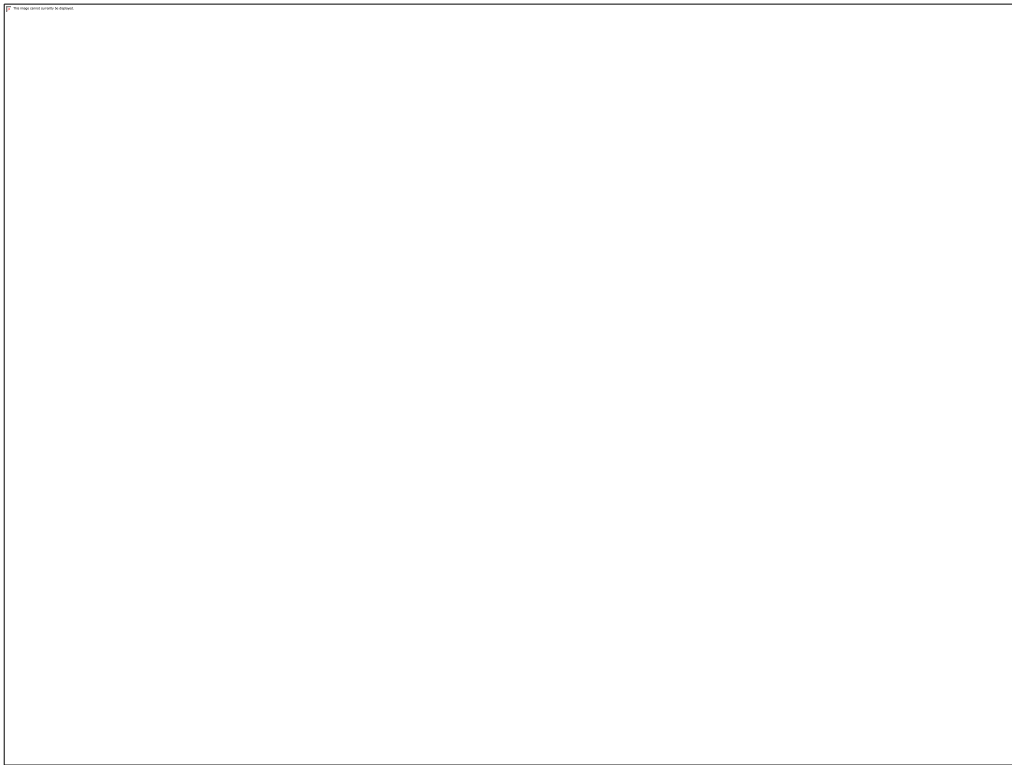
Picture One



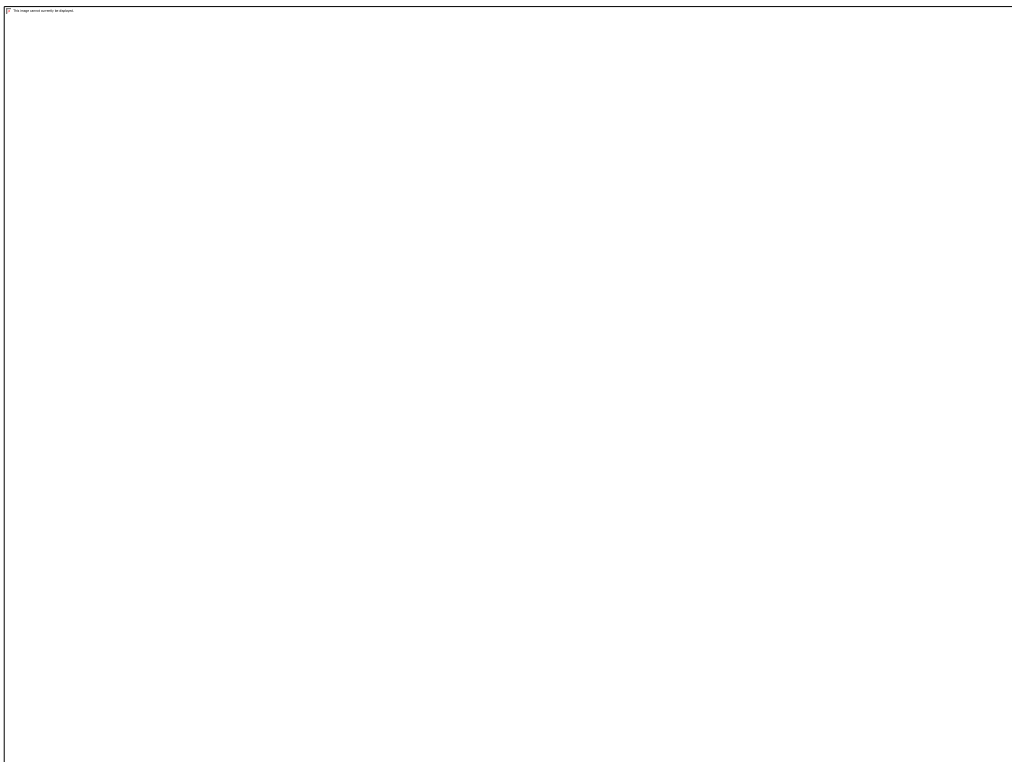
Picture Two



Picture Three



Picture Four



Chris Hall

AD Climate Change and Assets