A purple and white sign

Description automatically generated **Date of Release: 23 January 2024                                                          Ref: 4316**

**Council to bid for multi-million funding to replace Selsey coastal defences**

Chichester District Council will be bidding for funding for a multi-million pound scheme to help protect homes and businesses in Selsey from flooding and coastal erosion.

At their meeting on Tuesday 23 January, Full Council approved a business case that will be submitted to the Environment Agency. If the council is successful in its bid, the funding will be used to develop options and outline designs for a sea defence scheme that would reduce the risk of coastal flooding and erosion to Selsey.

Chichester District’s coastal engineering service, known as Coastal Partners, has carried out early feasibility work that highlighted more than 700 properties are at tidal flood risk. This number is predicted to increase over the next 100 years, along with the number of properties at risk from erosion. The current defences are now nearing the end of their life and although a lot of work has been carried out over the years to help prolong them, a long-term solution is now a priority.

“We are seeing more extreme weather events, which could impact on the town’s sea defences and increase the risk of flooding, which is why it is so important that we are all able to plan and prepare,” says Councillor Jonathan Brown, Chichester District Council’s Cabinet Member for Environmental Strategy. “Although it’s not one of the council’s statutory duties, managing future coastal flooding and erosion is a key priority for us and we have permissive powers to undertake such works.”

“The coastal defences for Selsey involve a number of elements, including seawalls, rock revetments, groynes, and beach. Over the last decade the council has undertaken a very successful programme of beach management through shingle replenishment, and Environment Agency funding is currently in place to continue these works until March 2026. Following Full Council’s agreement, we can now press ahead with producing a robust business case for the Environment Agency.

“There will be a significant funding gap**,** so we’ll be working hard in order to close this, including contacting the Environment Agency to highlight funding issues. We’ll also be working with other partners and the community on funding options for a long-term solution.

“I have to stress that there is no guarantee that we will be successful with the bid for funding, but it is important that we are looking ahead and considering all the issues. We want to maximise our chances of being able to prepare as well as possible for the next steps in protecting Selsey as these defences come to the end of their life.”

Lyall Cairns, Executive for Coastal Partners, the council’s shared coastal engineering service says: “The Selsey Peninsula is an exposed coastline with a long history of coastal flood and erosion risk. Before the construction of the existing seawalls in the 1950s Selsey had one of the fastest-eroding coastlines in England. Hard-engineered defences were built to reduce the risk to Selsey from both tidal flooding and erosion. Significant

“As these defences are reaching the end of their serviceable life, repair and maintenance is becoming more frequent and costly.  We have carried out work to produce a feasibility assessment looking at Selsey’s coastal defences, and we look forward to working with Chichester District Council on the next steps so that we can help protect the affected communities and businesses.”

While hard-engineered defences won’t be affordable or appropriate everywhere on the coast as the country adapts to rising sea levels, they will continue to be required in some areas. Huge amounts of work will need to take place to design and fund the scheme and if successful, it is anticipated that it would be around six years before construction work would start.

“This is a major project and during all of this work we will be closely consulting with the local community as well as businesses and other public organisations who have an interest in the Selsey coastline,” adds Cllr Brown.

Residents are encouraged to find out how they can help to protect against flooding. This includes signing up for flood warnings:[www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings](http://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings)**;** making a flood plan—[www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-flood-plan](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-flood-plan); and protecting their property.

People can also find out more about the council’s shared coastal defence service at: <https://coastalpartners.org.uk/> and the response provided to flooding at: <https://coastalpartners.org.uk/flood-response/> They can also find out frequently asked questions about the work in Selsey at: <https://coastalpartners.org.uk/Selsey_FAQs/>