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**Selsey sea defence project appoints engineering consultant**

A multi-million pound project to investigate options and designs for new Selsey sea defences has reached a key milestone, following the appointment of a specialist engineering consultant.

Chichester District Council has awarded experienced consultant, Royal Haskoning DHV, the work of investigating options and designs that will make it possible to progress the project and open up further funding opportunities.

Earlier this year, the council successfully bid for £2.9 million from the Environment Agency to support this important project to help reduce the risk of coastal flooding and erosion along the 4km of Selsey coastline. Led by Coastal Partners, the council’s coastal engineering service, the options and design stage of the project will focus on identifying the types of coastal management that are needed. It will also investigate future funding options.

“Although a lot of work has been carried out over the years to prolong the life of Selsey’s current sea defences, many of them were built in the 1950s and are now nearing the end of their life,” says Cllr Jonathan Brown, Chichester District Council's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environmental Strategy.

“We are also seeing more extreme weather events, which could impact on the town's sea defences and increase the risk of flooding. This is why it is so important that we are all able to plan and prepare, and why this project — which seeks to provide a longer-term solution to reducing the risk of coastal flooding and erosion along the Selsey seafront — is so critical.

“I’m very pleased to say that we have now appointed the consultant who will undertake work on the next stage of the project. The team at Royal Haskoning DHV bring extensive coastal engineering experience and knowledge of the region. They will now press ahead, exploring options and working up designs — this is called the ‘Options Appraisal and Outline Design’ stage, and it will run until 2027.

Tom Green, Senior Project Manager at Royal Haskoning DHV, says: “We are very pleased to be working in partnership with Chichester District Council and Coastal Partners to deliver the next stage of the Selsey Coastal Scheme. As the effects of climate change increase, this project seeks to strengthen the community's resilience to coastal floods and erosion. Royal Haskoning DHV has a long history of working on the sea defences along the Selsey coastline, so it is fulfilling to be involved with this pivotal project.”

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. This has helped protect the aging seawalls from major storms and protected local properties.

Jonathan adds: “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.

"While we have funding for this stage of the project, we expect there will be a significant funding gap in the future and 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 because as things stand, partnership funding is necessary to unlock the government grant.

"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. If successful and all goes to plan, we anticipate that construction work would start six years from now.

"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."

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 Coastal Partners at: [**https://coastalpartners.org.uk/flood-response/**](https://coastalpartners.org.uk/flood-response/)

A range of frequently asked questions about the Selsey sea defences project can be found at: [**https://coastalpartners.org.uk/project/selsey-coastal-defences**](https://coastalpartners.org.uk/project/selsey-coastal-defences)

**For further information, please contact Terri Foster, Senior Communications Officer at Chichester District Council on 01243 521298 or** **tfoster@chichester.gov.uk**

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