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[To: Address & Name]

Dear [Sir/Madam],

UPCOMING REPAIR WORK TO THE SEAWALL AT ST HELENS DUVER.

I am writing to update you on our plans for engineering works to repair to the seawall at St Helens Duver which are due to take place in Spring 2012.

We plan to undertake substantial repairs to the ageing seawall and promenade deck at St Helens Duver to ensure their integrity. In planning the work we have taken particular account of both the specific environmental and ecological constraints and the use of this area by both locals and tourists, who enjoy the beach, dunes, and other recreational facilities. However, this will, unfortunately, involve some disruption whilst the construction works are underway.

The planned works are due to commence in approximately 4 months time, and I hope that following responses to Frequently Asked Questions will help explain the principles of the project. However, if you require further information or would like to discuss any aspect then please feel free to get in touch with Peter Marsden who as the project manager will be best placed to help with questions of detail. He can be contacted on 01983 857223, or by email at peter.marsden@iow.gov.uk

Why are the repairs being undertaken?

As you will likely be aware, sections of the seawall along St Helens Duver have deteriorated over time and have become vulnerable to collapse, with some voids underneath the concrete deck behind the seawall. Despite minor repairs, sections of the seawall are in very poor condition and areas of the promenade and beach are currently fenced off, with temporary measures and safety barriers in place until substantial repairs can be undertaken.

Following the public consultations which took place as part as part of the Environment Agency's Eastern Yar Strategy (completed 2010) and the new Isle of Wight Shoreline Management Plan (completed Dec. 2010) the decision was taken to maintain the seawall at St Helens Duver for 50 years. The Isle of Wight Council (IWC) has a legal requirement to maintain the sea wall at The Duver; that is to keep it the way it was upon acquisition. The intention of the policy is that repairs will be made to the wall when failures occur. A staged replacement of sections of the wall is planned to keep the wall in its current location and at its current height. No works will be undertaken to repair groynes or to replenish the beach material. This is due to the internationally and nationally designated habitats and environments forming the beach and the sand spit behind the seawall, and the small number of properties at risk in the area. The intention is to repair and extend the life of the seawall and deck which is currently failing.

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What work is now due to be done?

The work currently planned is to repair the sea wall and promenade deck at St Helens Duver. These substantial works are due to commence in Spring 2012.

Why are the works being undertaken in spring 2012, rather than during the winter season?

Unfortunately we cannot undertake the works in the winter due to ecological constraints and the need to mitigate the impact of construction on over-wintering birds. However we also want to avoid disruption in the peak summer season as much as possible, so we are trying to find the best fit to undertake the works during the time in between.

The beach and area surrounding the seawall and St Helens Duver is internationally and nationally designated for its environment and habitats and is especially important for over-wintering birds. As a consequence we are not allowed to disturb the site in the winter months. Winter would also be a difficult time to work on the site dealing with winter storm waves, storm tides and high winds.

What is the start date of the proposed works?

The works can be prepared on site in March 2012 and are currently planned to commence from 1st April (to be confirmed).

How soon will the works be completed?

We are aware that this is a very popular area with locals and tourists alike, and we wish to minimise disturbance. Our contractor will aim to complete the works as quickly as possible and will work on relatively short sections at a time to minimise disruption to activities in the area. We are hopeful of being able to complete the work before the summer holidays.

We are currently developing the detailed design and programming of the works. We have required the timely completion of the works clearly in the tender process and the intended works schedule will be a key factor in determining the contract award.

Who will undertake the work?

We are currently going through a Tender process to appoint a suitably experienced contractor, who can provide a suitable design and programme of works in accordance with a clear understanding of the issues and restrictions at the site. We anticipate appointing the Contractor in January, after which we will be working with the Contractor to finalise the design and programme.

What will be the design of the seawall and deck?

The seawall will be repaired at its current height with a concrete encasement, with a promenade deck adjoining, in accordance with the present design.

Additionally, it is proposed that the concrete deck in front of the row of beach huts is restored, although to the south and north of the area, where there is sandy surface to the rear of the concrete promenade deck, if affected, this will be reinstated on a like-for-like basis.

We do not plan to put new railings in place along the repaired seawall, but to continue with the present arrangement.

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What restrictions are there on the works?

In planning the works, we will work to minimise disruption to the area, although this is a large project and it will continue over several months.

An important restriction on the design of the works is the need to minimise their environmental impact on the beach and surrounding area, and the seawall will be designed and constructed with this in mind. The planned works also take account of the heritage features and character of the area.

Other important aspects controlling the works are ensuring safe access to the site, which is relatively restricted, and working within the tidal cycle.

Which sections of wall will be affected?

Currently, the areas of seawall in worst condition are the sections in the southern half of the Duver (including the sections fenced off/exposed). This is the core area we will be repairing, but we are currently determining through the tender process how far north we can extend the repairs, within the available budget, to ensure maximum value for money. This will determine how far north along the wall the beach huts and properties will be affected.

Will access along the seawall be closed? Will access be maintained to the beach huts during the works?

Unfortunately the works will affect access along the seawall and access to beach huts. We hope to include 'sectional working', ie. not shutting the whole area all the time, but in sections. However there is no doubt that access to a number of beach huts will be limited during the spring for significant periods, as we foresee the whole deck in front of them being replaced (including all voids repaired, and resurfaced), along with repairing the seawall itself.

Will sections of the beach be closed?

Areas of the beach in front of the works will be affected, whilst the foundations of the new seawall encasement are put in place. We are very aware of the popularity of the area for visitors, the international designations affecting the beach and the tidal cycle, so we will be working to keep disruption to a minimum.

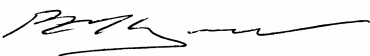
What happens next? When will I hear more?

We are currently seeking the most suitable tender in terms of value for money, design and working practices which suit the needs of the site, based on what can realistically be achieved.

We will contact you again next year with more information including confirmation of the design, the start date, the construction period and working patterns. Please visit the website www.coastalwight.gov.uk/sthelens for updates on the upcoming works in 2012. News updates and information (such as this letter) will be available to access there.

I do recognise that some disruption will be caused by the project and apologise for this, but hope that once the works are completed, the Duver will be secured and improved for the future.

Yours faithfully



Peter Hayward
Strategic Manager for Highways and Transport

cc. Stuart Love