

Hunstanton Coastal Defences – Section F & G Interim Works FAQs

A series of frequently asked questions (FAQs) have been produced by the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk regarding interim works required to a section of seawall located along the Hunstanton Coastal Defences.

These FAQs are being distributed to local stakeholders, businesses and traders located on and directly behind the Hunstanton coastal defences to provide information regarding the interim works required.

Where are interim works required?

Interim works are required to a 200m length of sheet piled seawall referred to as Section F and G. These sections of seawall are located between the Rock Shop Slipway and Pier Head Building shown on the map below.



What are interim works and how do they differ from routine repairs and the capital works project?

Each year the Council undertakes a range of routine repair works to the Hunstanton Coastal Defences. Routine repairs are undertaken within the existing boundary of the coastal defence and typically include works such as concrete patch repairs to defects on the seawall and promenade and joint sealant replacement.

In 2025, outputs of a series of geotechnical investigations identified that we now need to move beyond a routine repair approach to the coastal defences and commence a capital works project to replace aspects of the coastal defences which are at the end of their designed life. This is a multi-year project and is currently in the pre-construction phase, with construction works expected to commence from 2028/29 onwards, subject to funding and obtaining relevant permissions needed to undertake construction.

Interim works refer to activities beyond the scope of routine repairs within the existing boundary of the coastal defences which need to be implemented before construction of the capital works project from 2028/29.

In this instance, interim works are a temporary measure required to mitigate against the risk of further deterioration of the Section F and G seawall which routine works cannot address. Completion of interim works will enable the coastal defences to continue to perform their flood and coastal erosion risk management function, while work to develop the design and permissions required for construction of the longer-term capital works project takes place.

Why are interim works needed for seawall Sections F and G?

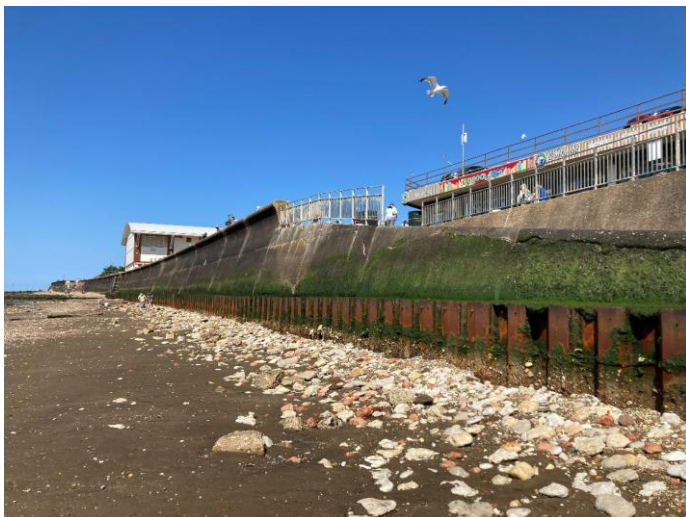
The Council has been monitoring the condition of a 200m length of sheet piled seawall between the Rock Shop Slipway and Pier Head Building (referred to as Section F and G). Independent engineering analysis of this monitoring data has confirmed that the seawall is now undergoing structural movement, and interim works are needed to prevent further deterioration and structural failure of the seawall until a permanent longer-term solution can be delivered as part of the capital works project.

What monitoring has been completed and what has this identified?

The Council has been undertaking beach level monitoring, structural stability monitoring and visual condition inspections of the seawall.

Beach level monitoring has confirmed erosion of beach material, caused by a natural change in coastal processes, has continued to take place over the summer for the sheet piled length of Section F and G seawall. This has resulted in excess of 1 metre of sheet piling being exposed, a trigger point for seawall structural stability.

Structural stability monitoring for seawall Sections F and G has detected movement of the seawall and concrete promenade slabs to the rear. Recent visual inspections have also identified cracking to the seawall and promenade.



Seawall Sections F & G



Seawall Section G



New cracking of seawall and promenade



Structural movement of seawall crest



How has the decision to proceed with interim works been made?

Following data collection in late June, the Council appointed a structural engineer to complete an independent assessment of monitoring data. This assessment confirmed that early-stage structural movement of the seawall along Section F and G is occurring and that there is a credible risk of progressive structural failure of the seawall occurring without intervention. This intervention is required before the capital works are anticipated to commence in 2028/29.

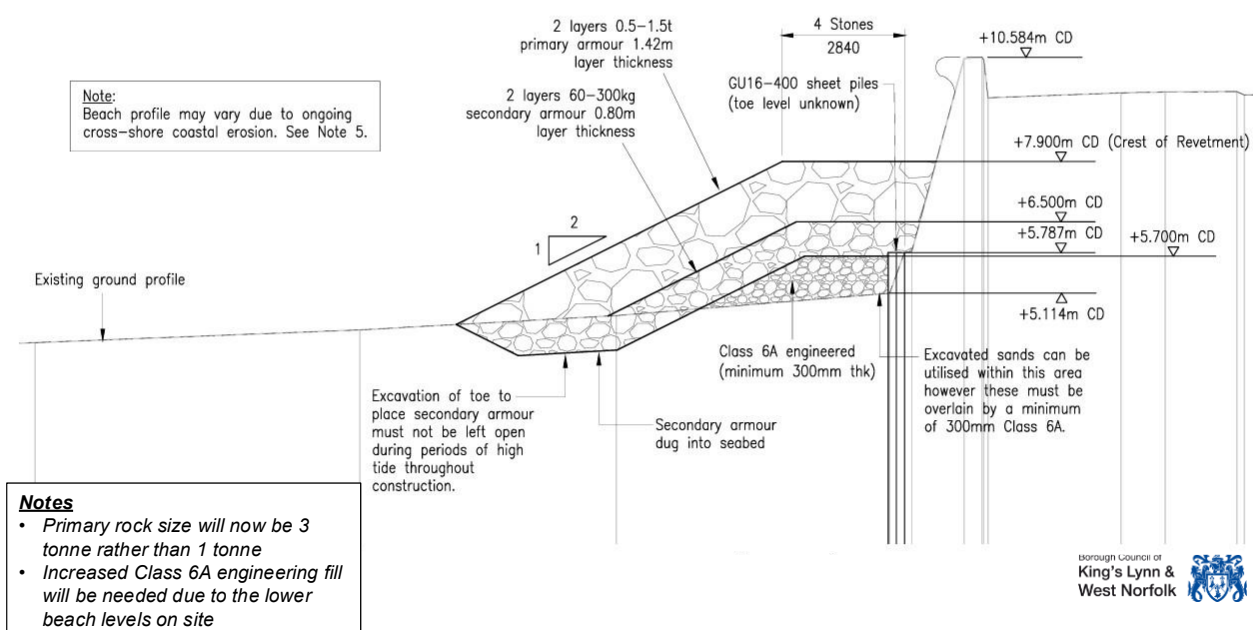
What interim works are required?

Interim works will involve temporary installation of granite rock armour at the base of the Section F and G seawall to provide sufficient mass to prevent further structural movement and failure of the seawall until a permanent solution can be designed and constructed as part of the capital works project.

The rock armour installation will be approximately 200 metres in length by 9 metres wide, with a height of 2-3 metres.

Below is an engineering cross-section design of the rock armour installation required.

Rock Armour Design



Where will the rock come from and how will it be delivered to Hunstanton?

Approximately 10,000 tonnes of granite rock armour will be required to provide sufficient mass to temporarily stabilise the seawall.

The exact details of the rock delivery are still being confirmed. It is currently anticipated the rock will be sourced from Norway and shipped to a nearby port. It will then need to be delivered via HGV on road to Hunstanton, with an estimated 300 tonnes of rock being delivered to site via road per day for the duration of construction.



Who will complete the construction works?

The rock armour will be constructed by Southbay Civil Engineering on behalf of the Council. Southbay Civil Engineering are marine construction specialists and have undertaken similar schemes previously.

Why has rock armour been selected?

The Council has been working closely with both Southbay Civil Engineering and Fairhurst to consider what options would be best suited for temporarily adding sufficient mass to the base of the seawall, alongside being robust enough to not be easily damaged in a high wave impact environment.

Rock armour is a widely used and proven form of coastal protection which can both add sufficient mass to the seawall, alongside being sufficiently robust to not be easily damaged and displaced under high wave energy conditions.

Why are the interim works temporary?

The purpose of these interim works is to stabilise the seawall and reduce the risk of further structural movement and ultimately structural failure. Rock armour installation will achieve this by temporarily adding sufficient mass to the base of the seawall to mitigate against the risk of further deterioration.

Completion of these interim works will then enable sufficient time to complete the capital works project design, obtain the necessary permissions and deliver a long-term solution which addresses the causes of structural instability of the seawall.

The interim works (rock armour) will later either be fully removed from site as part of the capital works or integrated into the permanent scheme if appropriate.

Are any permissions required to undertake these works?

Yes. In order to commence construction of the interim works, the Council first has to obtain several permissions: -

- (1) Planning permission from the Local Planning Authority (the Borough Council)
- (2) Marine licence from the Marine Management Organisation
- (3) Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Assent from Natural England

The Council has appointed Fairhurst (UK) Ltd to review permission options, confirm requirements to submit applications for the above permissions, and to provide a timeline for submission and determination.

When will construction of interim works start?

Construction of interim works cannot commence until relevant permissions to undertake the works are received from the Local Planning Authority, Marine Management Organisation and Natural England. The Council is working closely with Fairhurst and regulators to establish an indicative timeline for this and provide further updates in due course.

Further details around the construction of the rock armour will be confirmed over the coming months and further updates will be provided in due course.



How long will construction of interim works take once permissions are received?

It is currently estimated that construction of the rock armour will take between 10 to 12 weeks. This will be confirmed once permissions are obtained.

Will construction works affect access to the promenade, beach or local businesses?

Requirements for site compounds, access routes and traffic management arrangements are still being developed by the Council and Southbay Civil Engineering. While some temporary disruption may be necessary during construction, the Council will seek to minimise impacts on local residents, businesses and visitors wherever reasonably practicable. Further details on access arrangements, working hours and any temporary restrictions will be provided once construction planning has been finalised.

How much will these works cost?

The estimated cost of obtaining required permissions and delivering the construction of rock armour is £2 million plus a contingency allowance. These works will be funded by the Borough Council.

Is the seawall safe?

While monitoring of the seawall has confirmed structural movement has taken place, the seawall remains operational and continues to provide protection. Enhanced monitoring is being undertaken to ensure any further changes in condition are identified and managed promptly.

Will these interim works impact the longer-term capital works project?

No - the Council is undertaking both the interim works and capital works project in parallel.

The Council is working with Southbay Civil Engineering and Fairhurst to plan and deliver the interim works, while the longer-term capital works project is being delivered via the SCAPE Framework with Balfour Beatty and Jacobs.

Installation of the rock armour is a temporary measure only, and it will not replace the need to develop and construct a longer-term solution via the capital works project.

Why are interim works being completed instead of bringing forward the capital works project?

The Council has considered options to accelerate the delivery of the capital works project. However, the permanent solution which would be delivered requires confirmation of the preferred option, detailed design, environmental assessment, statutory permissions and an application for Flood Defence Grant in Aid funding to the Environment Agency before construction can commence. The current timeline for the capital works project is already seeking to undertake these activities in the most expedient programme possible, and therefore scope for acceleration is limited.

Interim works are therefore required to manage the immediate risk of further deterioration while these activities are completed and a long-term solution developed.



Further Updates

You can find out more about these interim works on the Borough Council's website here <https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/homepage/385/coastal> under the 'Hunstanton Coastal Defence Interim Works' tab.

We will provide further updates on the progress of these interim works on this webpage, alongside sending updates in further direct communications where appropriate.

Alternatively, you can contact us at any time via email at floodandwatermanagement@west-norfolk.gov.uk

If you would like to find out more about the capital works project, you can do so here https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/385/coastal/1237/hunstanton_coastal_defence_capital_works