

**REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON 8 DECEMBER 2009**

SUBJECT: LOSSIEMOUTH BREAKWATER

BY: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

The Committee is asked to note the present condition of the breakwater at the east side of the River Lossie's estuary, the investigations currently being undertaken, and the options for repair.

- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of the Council's Administration Scheme relating to coastal protection.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee considers substantial repair of the breakwater at an estimated cost of £250,000. This scheme is included in the Capital Plan review on the agenda of the next meeting of Policy & Resources on 15 December 2009.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Moray Council is the Coastal Protection Authority for the coastline in Moray under the Coast Protection Act 1949.
- 3.2 Concern has been raised by the public about the general condition of the breakwater immediately east of the River Lossie estuary. While a gap has appeared in the concrete wall, this is less significant than the loss of foundations to the wall that can only be seen at low tide. This loss is not recent, but stability will be affected by the loss of the stone bund described below.
- 3.3 The exact date of the breakwater's construction is unknown however, it may have been built in the 1950's. It is sited on a sandy beach below the high water mark and constructed of mass concrete.
- 3.4 The breakwater was built to control the position of the mouth of the River Lossie and to prevent long shore drift currents sweeping sand into the river outlet. The structure itself does not prevent the sea from flooding the estuary or adjacent properties but without it, the river course could meander.
- 3.5 In summer 1998, Moray Council, acting as Coastal Protection Authority, recovered stone and rocks from the adjacent beach and constructed a bund against either side of the breakwater. This gave limited protection however, in recent years storm damage has caused some undermining and settlement. This has been reported in the local press.

- 3.6 Initial investigations estimate that a repeat of the 1998 works, combined with placing sand/cement bag work in the undermined areas will cost £10,000. However, this option is not recommended as a permanent solution.
- 3.7 A more substantial alternative would combine that work with imported rock armouring to construct a revetment on either side of the breakwater, at an estimated cost of £250,000. A scheme of this value will require compliance with E.U. Procurement regulations and this will add considerably to the contract preparation and tendering period.
- 3.8 A scheme to completely replace the breakwater is estimated at over £2m.
- 3.9 Access to the site involves crossing the river estuary and any works at the breakwater will require consents. Consultations with regulatory bodies such as Scottish Natural Heritage, Marine Scotland and SEPA, as well as Crown Estates are underway.
- 3.10 The specialist marine consulting engineers, Arch Henderson will carry out an inspection of the breakwater on 6 December 2009 subject to suitable weather, swell and tidal conditions. A verbal report on their findings will be given to the Committee.
- 3.11 Coastal protection works including inspections of this nature are normally carried out during the summer months to take advantage of daylight, reduced swell, suitable low tides, and calmer weather.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan

This report complies with the objective of the Environmental Services Improvement Plan 2008-2009 to progress management of assets within the regulatory environment.

(a) Policy and legal

The proposed works would be carried out under the Coast Protection Act 1949.

(b) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

Financial – the minimum cost of repairs is £10,000. A more substantial scheme involving rip rap armouring will cost an estimated £250,000. This work would require capital funding in 2010/2011 and 2011/2012. At present there is no funding provision for any work at the breakwater in the Council's budget and works of this nature do not qualify for E.U. Funding.

If repairs are not carried out, undermining of the breakwater will continue and it will settle further. Due to its location on the beach,

below high tide level, this would not cause the sea to flood the estuary or adjacent properties. Maintaining the breakwater is however necessary to keep the river in its present course.

An external marine consulting engineer has been instructed to carry out an inspection and report on its condition. Design and supervision of a repair will be carried out by existing Council staff.

Ownership of the breakwater is unknown and so the proposed works would be carried out by the Council as Coastal Protection Authority.

(c) Consultations

Mark Palmer, Chief Financial Officer has been consulted and any comments will be made known at the meeting.

Alistair McEachan, Principal Solicitor (Commercial & Conveyancing) has been consulted and is in agreement with the report.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the present condition of the breakwater and considers substantial repair of the breakwater at an estimated cost of £250,000 subject to financial approval at the next meeting of Policy & Resources Committee on 15 December 2009.**

Author of Report: Keith Stratton, Senior Engineer (Transportation)
Background Papers:
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