

## ANGUS COUNCIL

ROADS COMMITTEE

6 MARCH 1997

RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

17 APRIL 1997

### COASTAL EROSION AT MILTON MILL, MONIFIETH: - UPDATE

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF ROADS

#### ABSTRACT

This report updates the Committees on recent developments with respect to the coastal erosion problem at Milton Mill, Monifieth and outlines the way forward in seeking to achieve a long term solution to the problem.

#### 1 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committees are asked to note for their respective interests:-

- (i) that the emergency works required at Milton Mill (as agreed in Report No. 998/96) have now been completed, thereby stabilising those local lengths of retaining wall at immediate risk;
- (ii) that the temporary closure order on the coastal footway has been lifted since the emergency works have stabilised those lengths of the wall which were previously placing the footway under immediate threat and in recognition of the loss of amenity which would have been continued had the closure been maintained.

- (iii) that the Director of Roads will continue to monitor the structural condition of the whole length of the existing timber retaining wall, particularly through the winter months when the risk of storm damage is at its greatest;
- (iv) that a dialogue has been established between officers of the Council and representatives of both Railtrack and the North of Scotland Water Authority with a view to attempting to obtain agreement on an equitable and appropriate allocation of funding required from each of the interested parties to enable a coast protection scheme which will be necessary to provide a long term solution to the problem of the deterioration of the existing retaining wall;
- (v) that the Director of Roads in conjunction with the Director of Law and Administration will keep the Committees apprised of the progress which is being made in the promotion of the protection scheme.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

The Committees were informed of the situation at Milton Mill in Reports No 697/96 and 998/96. This current report updates the Committees on the present status and provides an outline of the proposed way forward.

## 3 DETAILS

- (1) The existing timber sleeper retaining wall at Milton Mill, Monifieth had been damaged locally by the sea in March 1996. It has become evident that the retaining wall and the coastal footpath lying between the wall and the boundary fence to Railtrack's property is in the ownership of Angus Council. It is also known that North of Scotland Water Authority (NOSWA) have a rising sewer running along the line of, and below, the footpath.
- (2) It is recognised that whilst it was only a relatively short length of wall (20m approx) which was in immediate danger of failure, the whole wall is now

heavily weathered (due to erosion/attack by the elements) and that the entire length of the wall (250m approx) is in need of stabilisation or replacement. While local measures could be taken to stabilise that length under immediate threat, it is evident that a long term solution is required which addresses the whole length of wall.

- (3) Angus Council are also the Coast Protection Authority (under the terms of the Coast Protection Act 1949) and as such are empowered to promote a coast protection works scheme, seeking contributions from those other bodies having an interest at the location. It was therefore decided after consideration that the best way forward would be for the Council to promote such a scheme under the terms of the Act.
- (4) Throughout the summer and autumn months attempts had been made to instigate dialogue with the other interested parties with this aim in mind and although some progress had been made by correspondence it was evident, bearing in mind the long lead-in time which a works scheme requires, that physical measures were not likely to appear on the ground in sufficient time to protect that local length of wall under greatest threat from the elements, and especially so during the winter months.
- (5) In recognition of the potential danger to the public using the footpath in the event that the wall should fail, a temporary closure order was placed on the footpath in September 1996 prohibiting the use of that part of the path immediately behind the length of wall under greatest threat.
- (6) The condition of the wall has been under continual review by the Director of Roads and it was evident by the late autumn that the local length of wall had further deteriorated to such an extent that it was at immediate risk of complete collapse, thereby threatening the integrity not only of the embankment and footpath, but also NOSWA's sewer, and thereafter Railtrack's main east coast railway line.

The Council also has a permissive power under the Act to implement emergency measures where it feels it necessary and appropriate so to do. In view of the deteriorating situation, and the likelihood that a major scheme could not be agreed upon and implemented quickly, it was agreed (Report No 998/96) to undertake appropriate localised, emergency measures to stabilise the wall and embankment where they were at immediate risk.

- (7) These works were commenced in December 1996 and are now completed.
- (8) In view of the protection which has now been afforded to the retaining wall (locally) and the desire to have the use of the footpath available to the public the temporary closure order has been lifted and the footpath is now re-opened for public use. Nevertheless it is still the case that the remainder of the wall is in a poor condition and, subject to the weather/sea conditions may, elsewhere in its length, be subject to further erosion damage. It is therefore proposed that the Director of Roads continues to monitor the structural condition of the wall pending resolution of a long term solution.
- (9) A meeting has been held between representatives of Angus Council, NOSWA and Railtrack with a view to determining an appropriate and equitable apportionment of the probable capital cost associated with the necessary works scheme required to achieve a long term solution to the problem. It was agreed in principle at the meeting that each party had an interest at the location although the parties had differing views of the value of their interest and their ability to contribute to costs. Recent correspondence to the Director of Law and Administration from Railtrack indicates that their attitude has hardened in this regard and they have indicated that the value of their interest is likely to be relatively small in financial terms. This is not encouraging. Nevertheless tripartite discussions continue in an attempt to reach agreement on this issue.

Thereafter it may be necessary for the Council to promote a works scheme and have such a scheme approved by the Secretary of State. The necessary

submission in support of a scheme requires inter alia a cost-benefit analysis and probably an environmental statement in addition to the technical, engineering details.

- (10) It is difficult to predict with confidence how long this process may take given the sensitivity of current negotiations, however it is possible that it may be difficult to constrain the whole process within the 1997/98 financial year. The emergency works which have been undertaken recently should be sufficient to provide enough time to resolve the issues, unless there are particularly severe erosion conditions, or the remainder of the wall deteriorates unexpectedly rapidly.

#### 4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Until the matters referred to in the report are resolved it is impossible to quantify accurately and with confidence what the financial implications to the Council may be. Allowance has been made in the provisional 1997/98 capital programme for the Council to make a contribution to the total capital costs of the scheme, based on an apportionment between the Council, Railtrack and NOSWA.

#### 5 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, the Director of Law and Administration, the Director of Finance and the Director of Recreation Services have been consulted in the preparation of this Report.

## 6 CONCLUSION

Stop gap measures have been undertaken at Milton Mill, Monifieth to stabilise and protect the local length of existing timber retaining wall from collapse. These measures have enabled the reopening of the coastal footpath. The temporary closure order has therefore been lifted and the path has been reopened.

Dialogue is on-going with both Railtrack and NOSWA in an attempt to reach agreement on an appropriate long term solution to the problem. In the interim the Director of Roads will continue to monitor the condition of the wall.

Dr Bob McLellan  
DIRECTOR OF ROADS

### NOTE

No background papers as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

JG/JSG  
25 February 1997  
REPORTS/milton.update