



UNDERCLIFF DRIVE CONSULTATION

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 59/19

8 JULY 2019

The purpose of this Report is to ask Members to determine if there should be a corporate response from the Town Council to the current consultation on the proposed reinstatement of Undercliff Drive and, if so, what form it should take.

No. DETAILS

1) BACKGROUND

- a) The background to the landslip and the current consultation is attached to this Report as an extract from the Isle of Wight Council's web site announcement of the consultation.
 - b) The consultation opened on 14 June and closes on 26 July.
-

2) RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to discuss the proposal and consider the Town Council's response to it.

The council is seeking the views of residents, businesses and visitors on possible plans to re-open Undercliff Drive to through traffic.

Undercliff Drive (A3055) connects Ventnor to Niton via St Lawrence. The road passes through an ancient landslide complex known as the Undercliff.

Historic records of landslide events over the past 200 years have shown the area has been subjected to regular ground movement. While some areas of the Undercliff have had a reputation for landslide movement, much of the developed areas of Ventnor, St Lawrence and Niton Undercliff have remained largely unaffected by major events.

The causes of ground movement along the Undercliff have been studied extensively and are well understood. Ground movement is often linked to periods of prolonged winter rainfall.

During the very wet winter of 2013/14, Undercliff Drive was affected by major ground movement. This landsliding led to the loss of the road at two locations, effectively 'land-locking' nine properties between the two sites.

The closure of Undercliff Drive has resulted in a diversion of traffic through the village centres of Niton and Whitwell via carriageways with lower road classifications. This has resulted in increased vehicle movements through these villages.

Following the two landslides, the Isle of Wight Council implemented a scheme to construct a new access road at one of the two locations. This work, completed in 2016, allowed vehicles to reach the nine affected properties from Niton, to the west. A shared footpath/bridleway at the site of the second landslide was also constructed in 2016 which enabled access from the Ventnor to the east, but only for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

This consultation seeks views on whether the road at this point should be reconstructed allowing vehicles to resume using the route.

The council, working with leading geotechnical consultants who have been involved in studying the Undercliff for three decades, has identified that producing a design for a scheme to re-open Undercliff Drive to through vehicular traffic would cost in the region of £200,000.

This design would involve a number of studies including topographic survey, ground investigation boreholes, stability analysis and environmental impact along with talking to key stakeholders. This work would produce a preferred engineering solution allowing the scheme to be accurately costed.

Currently the cost of a scheme to re-open the road to through traffic is estimated to be between £1 million and £2 million dependent on whether the scheme allowed one or two way traffic, whether traffic signals were required and if the new route would be restricted to vehicles below a certain weight. However, it needs to be acknowledged that ground movement will continue in the future, particularly if climate change predictions about increased winter rainfall prove correct.

Any investment in the area will need to take this into account.

Have your say by completing the [online survey](#)