

Plans submitted to help protect vital rail link to the south west

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Network Rail has submitted plans to Teignbridge District Council for the remainder of the new £80m Dawlish sea wall which will help protect the vital rail artery to the south west from rising sea levels and extreme weather for the next 100 years.

Work on the first section of the wall, at Marine Parade, is expected to be completed this summer. Plans for section two, which will run for 415 metres between Coastguards and Colonnade breakwaters, have now been submitted, allowing the public to view and comment on the plans before a decision is made.

As well as protecting the future of the railway for generations to come the local community will also benefit from a new accessible footbridge at the station and a wider safer promenade which retains the views of the coast – a feature that the area is famous for.

Network Rail has submitted the plans for prior approval under its permitted development rights while Listed Building Consent is also being sought from the council as the work is physically attached to the Grade II listed Dawlish station. Both submissions can be viewed on the council's website.

Mike Gallop, Network Rail's Western route director, said: "We have been working tirelessly to protect this vital rail artery for Devon and Cornwall while considering the impact of our work on the local community.

“We can see from the work progressing at Marine Parade that the new sea wall is doing its job – returning the waves to the sea and reducing the amount of water and spray reaching the tracks.

“Building the second section between Coastguards and Colonnade breakwaters will complete the £80m project the Government has funded to provide resilience for the railway through Dawlish.”

Cllr Andrea Davis, chair of the Peninsula Rail Task Force, said: “Protecting this line and making it resilient has been the number one priority for the task force ever since we started, following the damage by storms in 2014. We are absolutely committed to ensuring that our network can withstand the weather and ensure people can travel across the peninsula safely and reliably.

“We’re pleased to support the planning application as a result. We recognise that there are sensitivities around the proposals, but we are keen to work with the local community to ensure their concerns are addressed, whilst balancing the needs of the wider peninsula.”

Photo credit: Network Rail