Record of Officer Decision made under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

Nature of Decision Collapsed drain on land at Prospect Green – Award of Contract to Maintain Drains
Title of Officer Taking Decision Asset and Compliance Manager
Date of Decision Order raised 18/03/26 and additional expenditure authorised 10/04/26
Value of Contract/Expenditure Incurred Total £11,126.02 18/03/26 – order £5,529.18 10/04/26 – additional expenditure £5,596.84
Reasons for Decision Urgency of works required due to rapid formation of sinkhole and risk posed to public open space, public footpath and adjacent road. Additional expenditure Ground surrounding the pipe heavily waterlogged, with soil liquefying during excavation, resulting in unstable trench conditions and a high risk of collapse. 12" clay sewer, extent of collapse significantly greater than first anticipated, spanning approximately 6m, uncharted low voltage electrical cabling identified crossing the excavation. At initial inspection, there was no visible flow within the upstream chambers, which were heavily silted and appeared static, therefore no indication that isolation would be required. The level of flow and the volume of groundwater only became apparent once the system was opened up. This groundwater is likely the result of prolonged infiltration

following the collapse, which had gone unnoticed until the sudden formation of the sinkhole and could not have been reasonably anticipated from surface inspection alone. Additional safety works required to access trench and complete repair, additional shuttering, additional materials imported into site as slurry type backfill cannot be reused as too liquefied.
Details of Alternative Options Considered and Rejected No – Emergency works due to health and safety risk to public and risk of further damage to Council and third party owned assets. In line with Financial Regulation 4.8, Town Clerk, Mayor and Deputy Mayor consulted by telephone and email prior to authorisation being given for additional expenditure
Record of any conflict of interest declared by a Councillor consulted on the Decision None
Details of any background papers Finance and Governance Committee 18th March 2026, Minute No 7. E-mail correspondence between Assets & Compliance Manager, Mr J. Taylor of Maintain Drains and Town Clerk, 10th April 2026. Report from Pipefix, 9th/10th April 2026. Council Meeting 27th April 2026, Minute No. 235.

Martin Ayres

From: Admin
Subject: FW: Quote QU-05489 - RE: Prospect drain issue
Attachments: INTERIM REPORT PROSPECT GREEN SWANAGE.docx

Importance: High

Hi Martin

Further to additional phone calls between myself and Jonathan Taylor this morning a discount to the quote has been negotiated. Therefore the revised total cost for the works is now £11,126.02 + VAT.

Kind regards

Gail

Gail Percival
Assets and Compliance Manager
Swanage Town Council, Unit 5 Anvil Centre
Prospect Business Park, Victoria Avenue, Swanage, Dorset BH19 1EJ
Tel: 01929 766034 Mobile: 07511 166866
Website: www.swanage.gov.uk

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From: Gail Percival <g.percival@swanage.gov.uk>
Sent: 10 April 2026 08:54
To: Martin Ayres <m.ayres@swanage.gov.uk>
Cc: Alison Spencer <a.spencer@swanage.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: Quote QU-05489 - RE: Prospect drain issue
Importance: High

Hi Martin

Please find attached and below further to my email and call yesterday regarding this matter. Taking into account the information provided by Maintain Drains and Pipefix, the phone conversations and site meetings I have held with these contractors over the past 24 hours, and the current risks posed by an open and unstable excavation in a public area plus the risks of further ground instability in the surrounds associated with pausing the works (noting the current continued unrestricted flow of water) it is my recommendation that we approve urgently the additional expenditure of £7,163.28+ VAT in order that these works can be completed forthwith.

I am happy to discuss this matter further.

Many thanks

Gail

Gail Percival
Assets and Compliance Manager
Swanage Town Council, Unit 5 Anvil Centre
Prospect Business Park, Victoria Avenue, Swanage, Dorset BH19 1EJ
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From: Jon Taylor
Sent: 10 April 2026 08:30
To: Gail Percival <g.percival@swanage.gov.uk>
Cc: Maintain Helpdesk; George Roman <g.roman@swanage.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Quote QU-05489 - RE: Prospect drain issue

Subject: Prospect Green, Swanage – Emergency Drain Repair Update & Revised Costs

Good morning Gail,

Following our recent attendance at Prospect Green to address the collapsed surface water sewer and associated sinkhole, I wanted to provide a clear update on the situation and explain the requirement for additional works and revised costs.

As you're aware, the works were progressed urgently due to the rapid formation of the sinkhole and the immediate risk this posed to the public footpath and adjacent road. The priority was to make the area safe and prevent further ground loss.

During the initial excavation works, a number of unforeseen site conditions were encountered which could not reasonably have been identified prior to opening up. The ground surrounding the pipe is heavily waterlogged, with soil effectively liquefying during excavation, resulting in unstable trench conditions and a high risk of collapse. The pipe itself has been confirmed on excavation as a 12" clay sewer, with the extent of collapse significantly greater than first anticipated, spanning approximately 6 metres, and uncharted low voltage electrical cabling was also identified crossing the excavation area.

In addition, there is a constant inflow of water into the system, traced back to the overflow connection from a nearby pond, approximately 100 metres away. While this connection was known, it is currently discharging continuously, likely due to a failed or absent control valve, with a level of flow significantly greater than would reasonably have been anticipated, particularly following a

prolonged period of drier weather. Whilst it may have been possible to defer works to drier months, the rate at which the sinkhole developed and the associated risk to the public footpath and adjacent highway meant that delaying the works was not considered a safe or viable option.

At the time of our initial inspection, there was no visible flow within the upstream chambers, which were heavily silted and appeared static, so there was no indication that isolation would be required. The level of flow and the volume of groundwater only became apparent once the system was opened up. This groundwater is likely the result of prolonged infiltration following the collapse, which had gone unnoticed until the sudden formation of the sinkhole, and in combination with the pond inflow created conditions that could not have been reasonably anticipated from surface inspection alone.

Despite deploying additional pumps and forming a sump, the inflow could not be controlled and the excavation refilled completely overnight. In its current state, the trench presents a collapse risk and works cannot proceed safely under the original scope. To complete the repair safely, the scope now requires trench support, isolation of the incoming flow using an inflatable bung with controlled overpumping, a larger excavation to create a safe working area, replacement using 12" materials, removal of unsuitable excavated material with imported stone for reinstatement, and extended plant and labour to complete and reinstate the works properly.

I have attached our contractor's interim report, which sets out the findings and day-by-day progression on site in more detail.

The original approved cost was £5,529.18 + VAT, with additional works estimated at £7,163.28+ VAT, bringing the revised total to £12,692.46 + VAT.

I appreciate this is a significant increase, however the conditions encountered are genuinely unforeseen and could not have been established without excavation, and proceeding without these measures would present a safety risk and likely result in further ground instability.

We have acted quickly to secure the site and prevent further deterioration, and have taken a pragmatic approach to keep the works moving. Given the current conditions and the excavation remaining open, it would be helpful to have confirmation on how you'd like to proceed as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary delay, additional standby costs, and to allow reinstatement to be completed promptly.

If you would like to discuss this further, I'm happy to run through.

Many thanks,

Jonathan Taylor
Managing Director
Maintain Drains
01202 300040

https://linktr.ee/maintaindrains

Please note - I am sending you this email at a time that is convenient for me and my work pattern. Please do not feel obligated to respond or take any action outside of yours.

Pipefix

INTERIM REPORT
ADDITIONAL WORKS REQUIRED
COLLAPSED DRAIN REPAIR AT PROSPECT GREEN, OFF PROSPECT GREEN, SWANAGE BH19 1BE

We have been on site at the above on Wednesday 8th April and Thursday 9th April and have carried out exploratory excavations. There are various issues which will need to be addressed before we can commence any further.

This means that works as previously planned cannot go ahead for safety reasons and additional works, materials and plant will be required to complete.

1. A midi drag-box will be required to support the sides of the excavation.
2. Larger pipe and fittings are required.
3. Due to the state of the excavated ground, this cannot be used to reinstate and muckaway and stone in will be needed.
4. A specialist inflatable bung is required to bung off pond outlet to stop the constant flow of water into the work area. Water will be pumped from the second chamber and diverted on to the grass
5. Top soil and grass seed to reinstate to a good standard is required, due to the extended works.
6. The excavation area needs to be extended so safe works can be undertaken. Therefore, more heras panels and longer excavator hire are necessary.
7. Due to the change in scope of works, up to 4 additional days on site will be required.

Day 1 (Wednesday 8th April 2026)
Attended site.
Commenced excavation.
Noted amount of water under the surface.
Sourced additional pumps.
Exposed collapsed drain and noted larger than initially thought.
Area of collapse also large than originally thought.
As larger trench required, sourced more heras panels.
Left excavation area barriered and safe overnight.

Day 2 (Thursday 9th April 2026)
Returned to site and noted the trench completely filled with water and overflowing.
Pumped out water.
Met with Swanage Council and ascertained water running from pond, which appears to have no shut off valve, so water is constantly flowing.
ascertained that scope of works needed to change for safe and effective working.

Pipefix

Returned to office to discuss with Project Manager.
Project Manager to put together Interim Report and Additional Costings.

Day 3 (Friday 10th April 2026)
COSTS FOR THIS NOT INCLUDED IN OUR ORIGINAL QUOTATION BUT RETURN TO SITE IS NECESSARY
Return to site.
Await delivery of trench box (we have made a decision to get this on site without prior agreement of the client as this is a necessary piece of equipment and delivery can only be made tomorrow).
Source more heras panels and excavation needs to be extended again.
Extend excavation to enable safe entry.
Install trench box.
Install trench covers and ensure heras panels are safe and secure.

Day 4 and Day 5
COSTS FOR THIS NOT INCLUDED IN OUR ORIGINAL QUTOATION
Return to site.
Bung drain (see diagram) and stop flow from pond.
Pump out over grassed area.
Carry out works necessary to expose all of the damaged drain.
Cut out damaged section and pieced through with new 12" PVC twin walled pipe.
4t Muckaway required.
4t Type 1 stone in for reinstatement.
Dress with top soil (approximately 3t) and grass seed.
Clear site and leave tidy.