

Somerset Rivers Authority Joint Scrutiny Panel Paper

Title: River Sowy / King Sedgemoor Drain Enhancement Scheme Update

RECOMMENDATION

The Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

1. Consider and comment on the latest position with regards the development of the Sowy / KSD scheme
2. Support the combined efforts of Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Boards and Natural England in identifying a package of works that delivers the desired benefits within the timeframe and funding of the LEP.

Purpose of the item

To update the Scrutiny Panel on the latest position with regards the River Sowy / King Sedgemoor Drain (KSD) scheme.

Background and context

At the SRA Board meeting on the 7th December 2018 progress with the Sowy / KSD scheme was discussed. The Board noted and supported the development of design for further enhancement of the Sowy-KSD system.

The Board had previously agreed that works to enhance the Sowy and Kings Sedgemoor Drain should continue with an incremental approach. We have previously completed works on the A392 Beer Wall culverts and channels, and refurbished Chedzoy Sluice

Scheme Progress

1. Desilting at Parchey Bridge and Dunball Railway Bridge was completed between October and November 2018. The contractors also removed old builders' rubble from the Parchey river bed. A notable success was getting Network Rail to clear the bridge arch under their rail bridge. This avoided the need for the SRA to take on the legal liability for any possible damage to the bridge during clearance operations.
2. Works upstream of the Dunball A38 road bridge are being scoped for delivery later this year. This will involve the "smoothing" of the channel where an old wall which formed part of the old tidal sluice protrudes into the channel itself. Previously Somerset County Highways removed a "lump of concrete" in the immediate vicinity.

3. Designers are actively engaged on further developing the first stage scheme for the main channel improvements on the Sowy and KSD. As previously reported, these works will comprise:
 - Repair or improvement to around 5 small water level control structures at key locations in the moors to prevent moors “drying out”.
 - Restoring low spots in banks on the KSD using material excavated from the KSD, varying the channel shape to improve ecological diversity at the same time. This will include some repairs and improvements to small outfalls in this reach.
 - Restore low spots on Sowy banks upstream of the A392 Beer Wall, winning material from the Sowy channel.
 - Widen lower Sowy (1-2m) to obtain material to raise or create banks on the lower Sowy. Length of channel covered will be flexible to match funding.

Outline designs have been produced to demonstrate further enhancement works on the Sowy and Kings Sedgemoor Drain. Works are expected to start later this year.

Current status

The EA and IDB are continuing to work closely to identify an affordable and legally compliant scheme that fits with the funding constraints and which can be delivered in stages if necessary to match available funding.

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Date: 22nd January 2019

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