

JOINT SCRUTINY PANEL OF SOMERSET RIVERS AUTHORITY

Friday 31 January 2020

10.00 am Taunton Library Meeting Room,
Paul Street, Taunton, TA1 3XZ



To: The members of the Joint Scrutiny Panel of Somerset Rivers Authority

Cllr Betty, Cllr S Coles (Chair), Cllr N Cottle, Cllr A Groskop, Cllr J Hunt (Vice-Chair), Cllr L Leyshon, Cllr Lisgo, Cllr Maxwell, Cllr Osborne, Cllr Smedley, Tratt and Vigar

All Somerset County Council Members are invited to attend.

Issued By Scott Wooldridge, Strategic Manager - Governance and Democratic Services – 23 January 2020

For further information about the meeting, please contact Andrew Randell on Tel: (01823) 359500, Email: democraticservices@somerset.gov.uk or Jamie Jackson on Tel: (01823) 359500, Email: democraticservices@somerset.gov.uk

Guidance about procedures at the meeting follows the printed agenda and is available at [\(LINK\)](#)

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

This agenda and the attached reports and background papers are available on request prior to the meeting in large print, Braille, audio tape & disc and can be translated into different languages. They can also be accessed via the council's website on www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers

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AGENDA

Item Joint Scrutiny Panel of Somerset Rivers Authority - 10.00 am Friday 31 January 2020

****Public Guidance notes contained in agenda annexe****

- (a) Appointment of Chairman
- (b) Appointment of Vice-Chairman

2 Apologies for absence

3 Declarations of Interest

Details of all Members' interests in District, Town and Parish Councils will be displayed in the meeting room. The Statutory Register of Member's Interests can be inspected via the Community Governance team.

4 Minutes from the previous meeting held on 20 September 2019. (Pages 7 - 18)

The Committee is asked to confirm the minutes are accurate.

5 Public Question Time

The Chairman will allow members of the public to ask a question or make a statement about any matter on the agenda for this meeting. **These questions may be taken during the meeting, when the relevant agenda item is considered, at the Chairman's discretion.**

6 Key Project Updates (attached) (Pages 19 - 22)

7 Precepting Legislation (Verbal Update)

8 Quarter 2 2019-20 Finance Report (attached) (Pages 23 - 28)

- (a) Confidential Appendix Item 7a (Quarter 2 2019-2020 Finance Report)

Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

PLEASE NOTE: Although the main report for this item is not confidential, the supporting appendix available to Members contain exempt information and is therefore marked confidential – not for publication. At any point if Members wish to discuss information within this appendix then the Committee will be asked to agree the following resolution to exclude the press and public:

Exclusion of the Press and Public

To consider passing a resolution having been duly proposed and seconded under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting, on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, within the meaning of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972:

Reason: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

9 **2020-21 Enhanced Programme and budget (attached)** (Pages 29 - 42)

- (a) Confidential Appendix Item 8a 2020-2021 Enhanced Programme Budget

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Item Joint Scrutiny Panel of Somerset Rivers Authority - 10.00 am Friday 31 January 2020

1972:

Reason: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

10 **Heart of The South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Project Spend (attached)** (Pages 43 - 46)

11 **Any other urgent items of business**

The Chairman may raise any items of urgent business.

Agenda Annexe

Guidance notes for the meeting

1. Inspection of Papers

Any person wishing to inspect Minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the Agenda should contact the Committee Administrator for the meeting – Peter Stiles on Tel: (01823) 357628 or Email: ltawse@somerset.gov.uk They can also be accessed via the council's website on www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers

2. Members' Code of Conduct requirements

When considering the declaration of interests and their actions as a councillor, Members are reminded of the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct and the underpinning Principles of Public Life: Honesty; Integrity; Selflessness; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Leadership. The Code of Conduct can be viewed at: <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/organisation/key-documents/the-councils-constitution/>

3. Minutes of the Meeting

Details of the issues discussed and recommendations made at the meeting will be set out in the Minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting.

4. Public Question Time

If you wish to speak, please tell Lindsey Tawse the Committee's Administrator - by 12 noon the (working) day before the meeting.

At the Chair's invitation you may ask questions and/or make statements or comments about any matter on the Committee's agenda – providing you have given the required notice. You may also present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit. The length of public question time will be no more than 30 minutes in total.

A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been signed. However, questions or statements about any matter on the Agenda for this meeting may be taken at the time when each matter is considered.

You must direct your questions and comments through the Chair. You may not take direct part in the debate. The Chair will decide when public participation is to finish.

If there are many people present at the meeting for one particular item, the Chair may adjourn the meeting to allow views to be expressed more freely. If an item on the Agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

An issue will not be deferred just because you cannot be present for the meeting. Remember that the amount of time you speak will be restricted, normally to two minutes only.

5. Exclusion of Press & Public

If when considering an item on the Agenda, the Committee may consider it appropriate to pass a resolution under Section 100A (4) Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, as defined under the terms of the Act.

6. Committee Rooms & Council Chamber and hearing aid users

To assist hearing aid users the Committee meeting rooms have infra-red audio transmission systems.

7. Recording of meetings

The Council supports the principles of openness and transparency. It allows filming, recording and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public - providing this is done in a non-disruptive manner. Members of the public may use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings and a designated area will be provided for anyone wishing to film part or all of the proceedings. No filming or recording may take place when the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting. As a matter of courtesy to the public, anyone wishing to film or record proceedings is asked to provide reasonable notice to the Committee Administrator so that the relevant Chair can inform those present at the start of the meeting.

We would ask that, as far as possible, members of the public aren't filmed unless they are playing an active role such as speaking within a meeting and there may be occasions when speaking members of the public request not to be filmed.

The Council will be undertaking audio recording of some of its meetings in County Hall as part of its investigation into a business case for the recording and potential webcasting of meetings in the future.

A copy of the Council's Recording of Meetings Protocol should be on display at the meeting for inspection, alternatively contact the Committee Administrator for the meeting in advance.

JOINT SCRUTINY PANEL OF SOMERSET RIVERS AUTHORITY

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Scrutiny Panel of Somerset Rivers Authority held in the Taunton Library Meeting Room, Paul Street, Taunton, TA1 3XZ, on Friday 20 September 2019 at 11.00 am

Present: Cllr A Groskop, Cllr John Hunt (Vice-Chair), Cllr L Leyshon, Cllr Osborne, David Tratt and David Vigar, Simon Coles (Chairman).

Other Members present: Cllr A Wedderkopp

Apologies for absence: Cllr N Cottle, Cllr Lisgo, Cllr Maxwell and Cllr Smedley

54. **Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

55 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 26 February 2019 - Agenda Item 3**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2019 were confirmed and signed as correct.

56 **Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4**

There were no public questions.

57 **Somerset Rivers Authority Joint Scrutiny Panel - Draft Terms of Reference - Agenda Item 5**

The Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) was launched on 31 January 2015 to play a key role in flood protection for the county. The Authority is run by a Board of partners including the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Somerset Internal Drainage Boards, the Lead Local Flood and Highway Authority (Somerset County Council) and the other Somerset Local Authorities in their roles as Flood Risk Management Authorities.

The SRA Board provided a strategic overview of the continued delivery of the Somerset Flood Action Plan; Flood Risk and Water Level Management in Somerset; and to provide a public forum and single point of contact for collective decision-making in respect of Flood Risk and Water Level Management in Somerset.

The SRA Board also had responsibility for identifying, prioritising, sourcing funding and overseeing the delivery of additional flood risk and water level management work across the whole of Somerset.

At its 23 March 2016 Board meeting, the SRA Board agreed to the establishment of a Joint Scrutiny Panel (similar to the Joint Waste Scrutiny model), which would meet twice a year, at the most critical and important times. This would ensure that officer attendance at Scrutiny Committees would be minimised, whilst providing all relevant partners with the opportunity to scrutinise the work of the SRA Board. Role of the Joint Scrutiny Panel was

examine the activities of the SRA and provide assurance to the SRA's constituent councils and partners that it is operating effectively.

To encourage wider involvement in the work of the Somerset Rivers Authority. Membership of The Joint Scrutiny Panel would consist of two non-executive elected members from each of the five Somerset councils and one from each Internal Drainage Board, totalling 12 Panel members. Each Local Authority and the Internal Drainage Boards would nominate or terminate the appointment of members serving on the Panel. The length of appointment was a matter for each partner represented on the body.

The Joint Scrutiny Panel would meet twice a year for the business stated. Additional meetings would be arranged as required. The date and time of each meeting would be agreed by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Panel, in conjunction with the support officer. The host authority would be responsible for issuing the papers and producing the meeting notes to all attendees. This would be done electronically. The Panel member and/or the Local Authority or Internal Drainage Board they represent would be responsible for any additional costs or services which included:-

- Any printing or stationery requirements, travel and subsistence expenses incurred i.e. car parking costs, fuel, any equipment required for site visits, i.e., appropriate footwear, hard hat, etc.
- The quorum for the Joint Scrutiny Panel was set at 6 representatives, with a minimum of 1 representative from 4 separate partners.
- The Joint Scrutiny Panel shall elect a Chair and Vice-Chair annually.
- The Scrutiny Panel Chair and Vice-Chair were to agree each meeting agenda in consultation with the support officer and liaison with the Senior Manager of the Somerset Rivers Authority.
- Agenda Items for the meetings shall be a standing item on the Panel's agenda.
- It was intended that agreement will be reached by consensus, however if a vote is required each Panel Member will have one vote. In the event of a tie the Chair shall have the casting vote.

Members of Local Authorities and Internal Drainage Boards on the Joint Scrutiny Panel will be bound by their own Codes of Conduct.

All Panel Members would need to comply with the principles of the Host Authority's Members' code of conduct as it applies to the declaration of interests, and compliance with the principles of public life set out by the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life.

Panel members were encouraged to participate fully in meetings, but would be aware of the limitations in capacity of officers to respond to detailed, individual queries between meetings.

Members of the Joint Scrutiny Panel must declare any interest during meetings of the Panel (and withdraw from the meeting if necessary) in accordance with their Council's Code of Conduct or as required by law.

All meetings of the Joint Scrutiny Panel would be open to the public unless it was necessary to exclude the public in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972. In accordance with their Council's Code of Conduct, elected Members of the Joint Scrutiny Panel must not disclose any information considered confidentially 'exempt' in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Joint Scrutiny Panel would be hosted under Local Government arrangements by Somerset County Council and supported by officers from the County Council's Democratic Services team. The Joint Scrutiny Panel would review its Terms of Reference on an annual basis.

Debate

- Vice Chair highlighted the relatively low attendance by Panel Members and requested that Panel Member make every effort to attend otherwise this would deny others wanting to be on the committee the opportunity to be involved and have input.
- Vice Chair requested that SRA scrutiny meetings were listed on each council's meeting calendar to help raise awareness about them.
- The four partners included the internal drainage board. What is the context of this statement?

Resolved:- that the Somerset Rivers Authority Joint Scrutiny Panel approved the Terms of Reference

58 **Somerset Rivers Authority - Draft 2018/19 End of Year Report - Agenda Item 6**

The draft End of Year Report was introduced by Jonathan Hudston. The report informed the SRA Joint Scrutiny Panel about SRA activities in 2018-19, as detailed in the SRA Annual Report 2018-19.

The SRA Joint Scrutiny Panel would meet twice a year. One traditional purpose of the Panel's first meeting would give members a chance to look back at the year gone-by, while the second meeting would look ahead to the SRA's proposed programme of works for the next financial year.

Appendix 1 set out to members the full SRA Annual Report 2018-19, a detailed account of work undertaken between the start of April 2018 and the end of March 2019.

Appendix 2 detailed a shorter version of the SRA Annual Report 2018-19, offering a summary. Information in both appendices was broken down by SRA workstream and where appropriate, activities were broken down into geographical areas. The presentation provided Panel members with some detailed examples of SRA-funded projects from each workstream and across the county.

At the meeting on 21 June 2019, the SRA Board took a preliminary look back at 2018-19. New members commented on the large variety of projects that the SRA was in the process of delivering. The Board highlighted the need to raise

awareness as much as possible of the work the SRA delivered. The Board discussed the SRA's current mix of projects and considered the balance of projects across workstreams. Members signalled their wish for a review of the SRA's short, medium and long-term priorities.

Debate

- Panel members emphasised the importance of educating organisations about the projects and work of the Somerset Rivers Authority and ensuring that information around this reached the right place, success stories were published and landowners played a part and felt engaged.
- This ensured work benefited everyone and work on Highways and flooding was taken into account.
- Suggestion was made that for this to be taken forward as an update that's provided at Parish Councils, although it was recognised that this required resource.
- The SRA were requested to present to District Councils on the work of the SRA to raise awareness off the work being done across the county.
- An action point of an update leaflet to distribute with annual billing was suggested to inform and make taxpayers aware of the authority and its purpose.
- There was an extended discussion on riparian responsibilities and the need to do more to raise awareness of landowners responsibilities. The Panel felt the SRA should do as much as possible to help the Environment Agency and others raise awareness.

The Somerset Rivers Authority Joint Scrutiny Panel noted the SRA project delivery in 2018/19 and encouraged wider participation from al organisations.

59 **Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public** - Agenda Item 7A

The panel were not required to go into Confidential Session.

60 **Somerset Rivers Authority - 2018/19 Finance Report** - Agenda Item 7

Somerset Rivers Authority 2018-19 Finance Report provided information on the financial position at the end of the 2018-19 financial year. The paper set out an overview of the funding available at the start of the year and a summary of how much was spent on each workstream. The total amount of funding allocated to projects for 2019-20 onwards was detailed. Members were reminded by the SRA Senior Manger that the vast majority of the funding was allocated to projects which were currently in the process of being delivered. Only £220,000 remained unallocated, with this forming the SRA contingency fund.

Somerset Rivers Authority did not deliver works, the partners that made up the SRA partnership delivered works on behalf of the SRA and once works were complete, claimed back the cost of the works. There were two main sources of funding which the SRA draws upon:

- a. Local Partner Funding – money raised annually by an additional amount on Council Tax and direct contributions from the Internal Drainage Boards.
- b. Growth Deal Funding – £13.049m of funding allocated in 2014 through the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (HotSWLEP) for specific large-scale capital projects.

Financial Performance set out the spend as at 31 March 2018 and funds allocated to schemes 2018-19.

Table A summarised the financial position as at the end of 2017-18. It also shows the total amount of funds carried forward and available in 2018-19.

The SRA actual and committed spend during 2018-19 was set out in a table as part of the report.

For the purposes of this report, actual and committed were defined as followed:

- Actual – total funds that have been paid to delivery partners (DPs).
- Committed – is where DPs have either completed, but not yet drawn down the funds from the SRA or where DPs have contracted to have works undertaken.

SRA delivery partners can only draw down SRA funding after works are completed and invoices have been paid. This results in a delay between what SRA delivery partners have spent and how much has been claimed from the SRA. As the 2018-19 financial year has now ended there is no committed or forecast spend for 2018-19, all spend is what has been paid to delivery partners (actual). Chart A shows the total actual spend for 2018-19.

During 2018-19 the SRA processed delivery partner claims totalling:- £3,815k, £1,122k (29%) of which was paid during Quarter Four.

Of the total amount paid: 44% (£1,693) related to Growth Deal funded actions including Bridgwater Tidal Barrier, delivery of 'Slow the Flow' Capital Grant Schemes, the Sowy/KSD Enhancement Scheme and Pioneer Dredging.

51% (£1,952) relates to Enhanced Programme works (funded from Local Partners funding). 5% (£170k) relates to administration and staffing.

Table A detailed breakdown of spend by project has been provided to Panel Members in 'Confidential Appendix 2018-19 Financial Detail'

Table B summarised the financial position as at the end of Quarter Four 2018-19.

Change in contingency from Quarter Three 2018-19, the total contingency held has increased by £41k since Quarter Three. The total amount of contingency held was £220,000. Contingency could be used to fund project overspends, increases in project scopes and new projects.

Table C below detailed the changes to the contingency fund.

Table D summarised the financial position at the end of 2018-19. It set out the total amount of funds allocated to projects and carried forward to 2019-20.

Debate

- The SRA detail by type for 2018/19 was reported by Jonathan Hudson.
- It was recognised that more could be done to educate and get information to the correct place. Further suggestion and offer was made to take forward where requested and report to Parish Councils. Landowners would need to be engaged and played a part in flood prevention.
- An update would be presented to the District Councils, along with a leaflet on the SRA to be included if possible in annual billing to residents setting the purpose of the precept.
- Publish the successes of the Authority was something being addressed for the future.
- Assurance was given that the ongoing works would benefit everyone and include flooding impacts on the highways network. There were resource implications in addressing all Councils separately so a combined briefing could be a preferred option.
- Work undertaken by the SRA would feed into the climate change framework which would be reporting back to Scrutiny in October.

The Panel noted the finance position as at the end of the 2018/19 financial year.

61 **Somerset Rivers Authority - Precepting Legislation Update** - Agenda Item 8

The Panel were updated on progress towards securing the passing of legislation enabling the SRA to be put on a sound legal and financial footing to become a precepting and risk management authority.

Since the inception of the Somerset Rivers Authority as an unincorporated association, it was the aim of the SRA partners to secure the long-term future of the SRA by putting it on a sound legal and financial basis. The Government committed itself to passing legislation necessary to secure the future of the SRA; the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) drafted the Rivers Authorities and Land Drainage (RALD) Bill1.

This Bill would give the Secretary of State the power to create Rivers Authorities (RA) as major precepting and flood risk management authorities. Defra was unable to secure government time to take the Bill through Parliament therefore David Warburton, MP for Somerton and Frome, picked up the Bill as a Private Members' Bill.

David Warburton MP presented the Rivers Authorities and Land Drainage Bill to the House of Commons (HofC) on 6 March 2018 (First Reading). The Bill eventually completed all stages in the HofC on 15 March 2019 and moved to the House of Lords (HofL).

The Bill was presented to the Lords by Lord Bethell on 18 March and passed its 2nd Reading on 16 May. The Bill received support from all parties and cross-benchers. There were several detailed interventions in the debate. Themes emerged around ensuring appropriate accountability, consultation, environmental responsibilities and climate change amongst others.

Current Status The next stage was due to be Committee Stage in HofL. On 4 June the Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee (DPRRC) published a report challenging whether the Private Members' Bill is the correct approach for the RALD Bill. The report conclusion was set out below:

'We were not only surprised but concerned at the proposals in this Bill. It is an attempt, upon flimsy grounds, to set aside the procedures which Parliament has put in place to protect the interests of citizens who would be unfairly affected by legislation. It would authorise the issuing of precepts—in effect, taxation—in a way which would be unaccountable and unscrutinised. It would allow the framing of Ministerial guidance in a way which would have legislative effect, without Parliamentary scrutiny. It would allow rules in primary legislation about the valuation of agricultural property to be replaced wholesale by statutory instrument with no requirement for consultation or other procedures for protecting private interests. And in order to set up one rivers authority in one part of England it would make provision for this approach to be replicated in every part of the country.'

Subsequently the Select Committee on the Constitution supported the DPRRC view by stating:

'We agree with the Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee and reiterate our view that it is constitutionally inappropriate to establish public bodies through delegated powers— particularly if the purpose of doing so is to avoid the bill having to go through the hybrid bill procedure.'

At the end of July we received confirmation from David Warburton that he would no longer be taking the Bill any further as a result of the objections raised by the committees above. David stated;

'As you can imagine, I am personally extremely disappointed, having worked on the Bill for Somerset for more than a year. But I am now working with Defra to try to ensure that all of its measures can form part of the forthcoming Environment Bill, which I hope will mean that we'll get there one way or another in the end.'

Given the recent turmoil in parliament it has not been possible to get any clear commitments from Defra about future legislation in relation to the Somerset Rivers Authority.

Despite the absence of clarity from Government the SRA Board continued to plan for the SRA to become a major precepting authority and risk management authority to keep the issue live in the minds of current and prospective government ministers.

A general election seemed highly likely it would be important to ensure current and prospective MPs were fully briefed on SRA activities to date, the long term

plans for the SRA and to seek commitments from candidates so they would support the passing of the legislation that would see the SRA put on a sound legal and financial basis.

If the RALD Bill had been passed into law, it would have been necessary to submit a detailed proposal to the SoS setting out exactly how the SRA would fulfil its legal functions and comply with all pertinent legislation; this would then have to be approved by Parliament. A proposal would also have to have been consulted on with residents of Somerset to ensure support for the creation of a new precepting authority. It was likely that whatever legislative process would eventually be applied, the process to create a Rivers Authority would be very similar in terms of the detail and consultation required.

Preparing a proposal would require extensive input from various subject specialists e.g. local government legislation, organisational governance, employment, finance, procurement, communications, consultation, etc. In June SRA Board Members approved the allocation of up to £100,000 from SRA contingency funding for use in 2019-20 to commission the necessary expertise to prepare a proposal. SRA Officers would continue to develop a proposal for the creation of the SRA as a precepting authority so that when the opportunity occurred the authority could proceed swiftly. However, what work to undertake will be carefully considered to minimise the risk of undertaking any abortive work.

Debate

- It was reported that the current position, whereby the SRA is funded by a 'shadow precept', will continue as long as the councils choose to raise it. It remains the case that every year at Budget setting councils will be required to make a decision to approve the precept.
- The SRA Board will continue to lobby Rebecca Pow MP, in her new role in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), for government to take forward necessary legislation to enable the SRA to become a precepting authority. She has voiced her support for the SRA board and the need to put the SRA on a stable financial footing to enable future works.
- Accountability and Scrutiny of the SRA was assured so that all districts were facilitated to engage with the SRA.

The SRA Joint Scrutiny Panel noted the latest position in relation to progress of the Rivers Authorities and Land Drainage Bill.

62 Somerset Rivers Authority - Key Projects Update - Agenda Item 9

The report provided the Panel with a summary update of each of the 'key' SRA projects as reported to the SRA Board. Key projects are generally those which are of larger scale and high value, and in receipt of a significant amount of Heart of the SW Local Enterprise Partnership (HotSWLEP) Growth Deal funding.

HotSWLEP allocated £13.049m of Growth Deal funding towards 'Somerset Flooding' in the aftermath of the 2013-14 Floods. The SRA Board is updated on key projects as they are important elements of Somerset's 20 Year Flood Action Plan.

Previously the Panel received individual reports on each project. All projects are now to be reported within one document to make the process more efficient and reduce the amount of information the Panel must review in advance of the meeting.

Background and context The SRA currently receives regular updates on 6 projects that are classed as key projects which are in the process of being delivered and upon which the SRA Board gets quarterly update on at Board meetings.

Current key projects were set out detailing LEP Funding, SRA Funding and Total Estimated Cost:-

Bridgwater Tidal Barrier (BTB) (£2m LEP) (£100m total cost)

River Brue (£0.275m LEP) (£0.225m SRA) (£0.5m total cost)

Oath to Burrowbridge Pioneer Dredging (£1m LEP) – (£1m total cost)

River Sowey – King's Sedgemoor Drain Enhancements (£4.193m LEP) (£2m SRA) (£6.193m total cost)

Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements Scheme (TSFAIS) (£0.065m LEP) (£0.235m SRA) (£6.8m total cost)

Strategic Approach to Mitigation (£0.050m LEP) – (£0.050m total cost)

Each project supports the delivery of Somerset's 20 Year Flood Action Plan. Some projects, such as the BTB and TSFAIS, have been in development for many years and the SRA is supporting their further development as part of a much wider funding package. Some projects, such as dredging, are only possible as a direct result of the LEP & SRA funding and came to the fore as a priority during and after the floods of 2013-14.

An important point to note is that LEP funding must be spent by March 2021. This a deadline set by central government. SRA funding does not have any limitations on its use.

Key Projects Summary and Latest Status

Bridgwater Tidal Barrier: The Environment Agency and Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) are working in Partnership to deliver the Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Scheme by 2024, subject to funding and statutory approvals. The project will reduce tidal flood risk to 11,300 homes and 1,500 businesses. The present value of benefits is £1,331 million. The current estimated cost of the Barrier and downstream banks work is £100 million. The benefits cost ratio is 13.

Wessex Regional Flood and Coastal Committee approved £4M Local Levy contribution to the scheme 2021/22 to 2024/25 at their meeting 09 July 2019.

The outcome of a bid to the Housing and Infrastructure Fund for £10m towards the scheme is expected in Autumn 2019.

River Brue Projects: In 2015 the SRA allocated £500,000 of its Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Growth Deal funding towards delivering dredging on the River Brue. LEP funding must be spent by March 2021. The project was being led by the Axe-Brue Internal Drainage Board. Progress has been difficult, in part due to the environmentally sensitive nature of the area of works. In December 2019 it was reported to the SRA Board that the Axe-Brue Internal Drainage Board could no longer lead on the project due to financial risks associated with failing to spend Growth Deal funding by the 2021 deadline. In March 2019 the SRA Board agreed to set up a sub-group and to delegate responsibility for finding a way forward to that group.

Latest Status: The group met on 15 March 2019 at Wells Town Hall. It was agreed that in order to remove the risk associated with the use of LEP funding for the dredge, £225k of local partner funding would be switched from the Oath to Burrowbridge dredge with LEP funds from the Brue dredge. Local partner funding can then be used to develop a legally compliant dredging proposal for the Brue free from the risks associated with the LEP funding.

Next Steps:

- Set up the senior officer project officer group.
- Develop and agree the project scope
- Appoint the project manager to deliver and manage the project to completion
- The project team will then take a draft project programme to the Board for consideration.

The remaining LEP funds (£275k) have been re-allocated to the following projects within the River Brue catchment.

Field Way, Highbridge, match-funding contribution to Wessex Water scheme to protect 21 houses from surface water and foul sewer flooding (£100,000 contribution to a circa £1.5m scheme).

Further updates were provided in relation to the following key projects:-

- Bridgwater Tidal Barrier
- River Brue Projects
- Oath to Burrowbridge Pioneer Dredging
- River Sowey – Kings Sedgemoor Drain Enhancements
- Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvement Scheme

Debate

- A concern was raised about the The Bridgwater Tidal Barrier relating to navigation not being possible when the barrier is closed. The Panel was

advised that addressing this was not part of the project scope but should others wish to fund a solution the EA would work with them on this.

- The Panel emphasised the importance of improvements on the River Brue and the need to see progress with plans for dredging. The panel supported proposals to invest in North Drain Pumping Station enhancements.
- The Environment Agency is a statutory consultee in the planning application process. In the majority of cases the EA's recommendations were accepted by local planning authorities.
- Flood Risk Assessment Permits would need approval from the Environment Agency to ensure benefit from applications through the land drainage process.
- Oath to Burrowbridge dredging – the Panel asked why the EA was not undertaking these works. The Panel was advised that the role of the SRA is to enable works that would not otherwise happen and the partners had worked together to deliver these works with the IDB delivering them. ..
- The dredging works are on target to be completed within the next 10 weeks. An update on progress will be provided at the next SRA Scrutiny meeting.
- The Panel was advised that maintenance of the previously dredged sections of river continued to be undertaken by the River Parrett IDB on behalf of the SRA using a 5 year contract with the contractor Van Oord.
- The Panel asked if dredging is financially sustainable and was advised that SRA funding has enabled the Parrett IDB to find a much more cost effective approach to dredging making it more affordable in the longer term. Maintenance is now undertaken using water injection dredging.
- Work along the River Sowey and Kings Sedgemoor Drain will increase their capacity; these act as a flood relief channel for the River Parrett. This will increase flexibility in the way that the system can be operated.
- The Oath to Burrowbridge and Sowey and KSD works will also require mitigation measures to offset the impact of changes to the river system which could negatively impact sensitive environmental areas or flood risk in other areas. These works will be funded using Heart of the SW LEP funds. The panel was advised that LEP funds have to be used by March 2021. Panel members emphasised the need to ensure projects complied with the terms of the LEP funding and any mitigation requirements. .

The SRA noted the latest position with key SRA projects.

63 **Joint Scrutiny Panel Work Programme and Future Training** - Agenda Item 10

The Panel endorsed its proposed work programme for 31 January and noted that a date for the Summer meeting 2020 would be circulated.

Panel members were invited to identify any subjects about which they would like to have information.

64 **Any Other Business of Urgency** - Agenda Item 11

There were no other items of business.

(The meeting ended at 13:00)

CHAIRMAN

Somerset Rivers Authority Joint Scrutiny Panel

Key Project Updates

RECOMMENDATION

The SRA Joint Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- Note and comment on the latest position with key SRA projects.

This paper updates the Panel on the latest progress with some SRA key projects. Key projects are projects regularly reported on to the SRA Board and which are usually of a larger scale and value.

Key projects are reported to the SRA Board by exception. Only when a decision is required, or a project has reached a significant milestone is an update tabled as an agenda item. This paper focuses on projects which have recently reached significant milestones or are due to progress towards a milestone.

Oath to Burrowbridge Dredging

The SRA Board allocated a proportion of its Heart of the SW Local Enterprise Partnership Funding (£1m) towards river dredging between Oath and Burrowbridge on the River Parrett. The work is being delivered by the Parrett Internal Drainage Board.

The original estimate was that the works would take 12 weeks to complete and up to 22,000m³ of material would be removed from within the river channel and deposited at the rear of the bank. In total 21,363m³ of material has been removed in 11 weeks.

Dredging activities started on the right bank on 16 September. The major works were completed on 29 November and the contractors vacated the site on the 4th December.

Persistent high river levels and wet ground conditions resulting from 155% of seasonal rainfall during September, 180% in October and 132% in November, made site conditions difficult towards the end of the work period. As a result the contractor has not yet completed all of the levelling, topsoiling and reseeding to the banks. The contractor will return in the spring, as soon as conditions are suitable, to complete that work and again at a later date, when a robust grass sward is re-established on the filled bank, to reinstate the temporary spillway.

Where necessary the contractor constructed a small temporary bank at low spots along the crest of the existing river bank before leaving site to reduce the likelihood of water overtopping. In addition, due to the high river levels experienced during the Christmas

period the Parrett IDB and EA officers placed sandbags at a small number of locations for the same purpose.

Officers from the Parrett Internal Drainage Board and the Environment Agency are working closely together to monitor conditions at the works site until such time as the remaining works can be completed.

Bridgwater Tidal Barrier

The SRA Board allocated a proportion of its Heart of the SW Local Enterprise Partnership Funding (£2m) towards accelerating progress with delivering a Bridgwater Tidal Barrier.

The Environment Agency (EA) and Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) are working in Partnership to deliver the Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Scheme by 2024, subject to funding and statutory approvals. The project will reduce tidal flood risk to 11,300 homes and 1,500 businesses. The present value of benefits is £1,331 million. The present value of capital and maintenance costs of the Barrier and downstream banks work is £100 million. The benefit cost ratio is 13.

The barrier will be located between Express Park and Chilton Trinity village. It will have two vertical lift gates. The scheme includes improvements to the existing downstream primary flood defences along the river Parrett together with new secondary defences in the flood plain.

On December 19, 2019 the Environment Agency announced the formal start of the legal process to gain the necessary permissions to deliver the project. Permission is being sought through a Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO).

- The TWAO is a “statutory instrument” which grants powers, amends by-laws and imposes conditions on the scheme promoter
- The TWAO effectively grants planning permission, permits changes to highways and footpaths, allows land acquisition, allows moving utilities

Ultimately ‘the Order’ must be approved by the Secretary of State (SoS). The process is being run by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and representations must be submitted to the Department.

- It is a very structured process determined by the Act
- Statutory consultees and others have been advised, plus newspaper adverts placed
- Formal Representations can be letters of support or objections
- Formal Representations must be made to Defra not to the EA
- If necessary, the SoS may call a public inquiry

There is an 8 week period when representations can be made to Defra. The period ends on 13 February. The TWAO documentation and information on how to make representations can be accessed via Sedgemoor District Council's website - <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/bridgewaterbarriertwao>

Sowy/King's Sedgemoor Drain (KSD) Enhancement Scheme

The River Sowy is used by the Environment Agency to take excess water away from the River Parrett near Aller. Water flows down via Beer Wall to King's Sedgemoor Drain (KSD) near Greylake, then re-joins the Parrett at Dunball. Providing more capacity in the Sowy-KSD system, so that it can be used more effectively, is a key aim of Somerset's 20 Year Flood Action Plan, which is overseen by Somerset Rivers Authority.

The Board agreed in June 2018 that works to enhance the Sowy/KSD should continue with an incremental approach. Phase 1 works include desilting at Parchey and Dunball bridges (completed November 2018), widening of the lower Sowy using a 'cut and fill' approach and work to structures to allay concern of localised increased water levels on adjacent land. The package also includes extensive work to mitigate any detrimental impacts affecting the protected environmental habitat areas (Special Protection Areas).

In September 2019 the Board gave the approval to proceed with commissioning the delivery of the environmental mitigation package and the channel works.

Project development for Phase 1 of the channel enhancement scheme has been ongoing. Archaeological surveys for Phase 1 were undertaken in November 2019, with no additional significant features of interest being discovered. The first drafts of the initial 'environmental scoping' reports having been discussed with Natural England officers.

The various surveys are integral to securing the necessary permissions to undertake the works. An Environmental Statement will be published for consultation outlining the various assessments undertaken and assessing the impacts of the project.

The design work for the 'in-channel' flood bank restoration works package is also progressing. The design consultants are refining the design principles and proposals for the flood banks and proposed channel ecological enhancements. Landowners directly affected by the scheme have been contacted and offered meetings to discuss the project.

Detailed packages are being developed and tendered for the environmental mitigation works. SRA partners have agreed to a two stage approach for mitigation. Phase 1 will be mitigation for the planned works for the foreseeable future (approximately 5 years). Phase 2 will identify the preferred longer-term approach to mitigation. The approach will be financially sustainable in the long term and one that accords with the direction of travel

being set out in the recently published Agriculture Bill where 'public funding will be provided for delivering public goods' e.g. funding for the storage of flood water on private land.

Phase 1 of the main channel improvements must be completed by April 2021 to meet the Heart of The South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) funding deadlines. The project team is focussed on meeting this timeframe.

RECOMMENDATION

The SRA Joint Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- Note and comment on the latest position with key SRA projects

Date: 22 January 2020

Author: David Mitchell, Somerset Rivers Authority

Somerset Rivers Authority Joint Scrutiny Panel Paper

Quarter 2 2019-20 Finance Report

RECOMMENDATION

The SRA Joint Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- Note and comment on the financial performance as at the end of quarter two of 2019-20.

Background and context

This report, together with the associated documents, deliver the financial reporting requirements consistent with the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Constitution and Local Memorandum of Understanding which states:

2.5 Host Authority

2.5.1 *As recipient and accountable body for the funding contributions from Somerset's local authorities, SCC shall act on behalf of the SRA Board as Host Authority. In particular it shall:*

- *Provide the services of its Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer at no cost;*
- *Provide accounting, financial analysis, accounts payable and receivable.*

2.5.3 *The SRA shall, where relevant and unless otherwise agreed, operate in accordance with Host Authority practices and procedures, including the following:*

- *Financial regulations;*

This report provides information on the financial position at the end of quarter two. It includes a proposal for moving the remaining budget from a number of completed projects to contingency.

Somerset Rivers Authority does not deliver projects, instead the partners that make up the SRA partnership deliver projects on behalf of the SRA and once projects are complete, claim back the cost of the works.

There are two main sources of funding which the SRA draws on:

- a. Local Partner Funding – money raised annually by an additional amount on Council Tax and direct contributions from the Internal Drainage Boards
- b. Growth Deal Funding – £13.049m of funding allocated in 2014 through the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (HotSWLEP) for specific large-scale capital projects

1. Financial Performance – spend as at 31st March 2019 and funds allocated to schemes in 2019-20.

Table A summarises the financial position as at the end of 2018-19 financial year. It also shows the total amount of funds carried forward and available in 2019-20.

Table A: SRA Spend as at 31st March 2019 and funds allocated to schemes in 2019-20 and beyond			
	Funds Received (or due)	Total Paid to Delivery Partners pre 2019-20	Remaining Funds
	£,000	£,000	£,000
SRA Funding			
CLG Funding	341		
Previous Years Local Partner Funding	11,201		
2019-20 Local Partner Funding	2,926		
SRA Local Partner Total	14,468	7,375	7,093
Growth Deal Funding	13,049	8,200	4,849
Total	27,517	15,575	11,942

2. SRA actual and committed spend during 2019-20.

For the purposes of this report actual, committed and forecast are defined as follows:

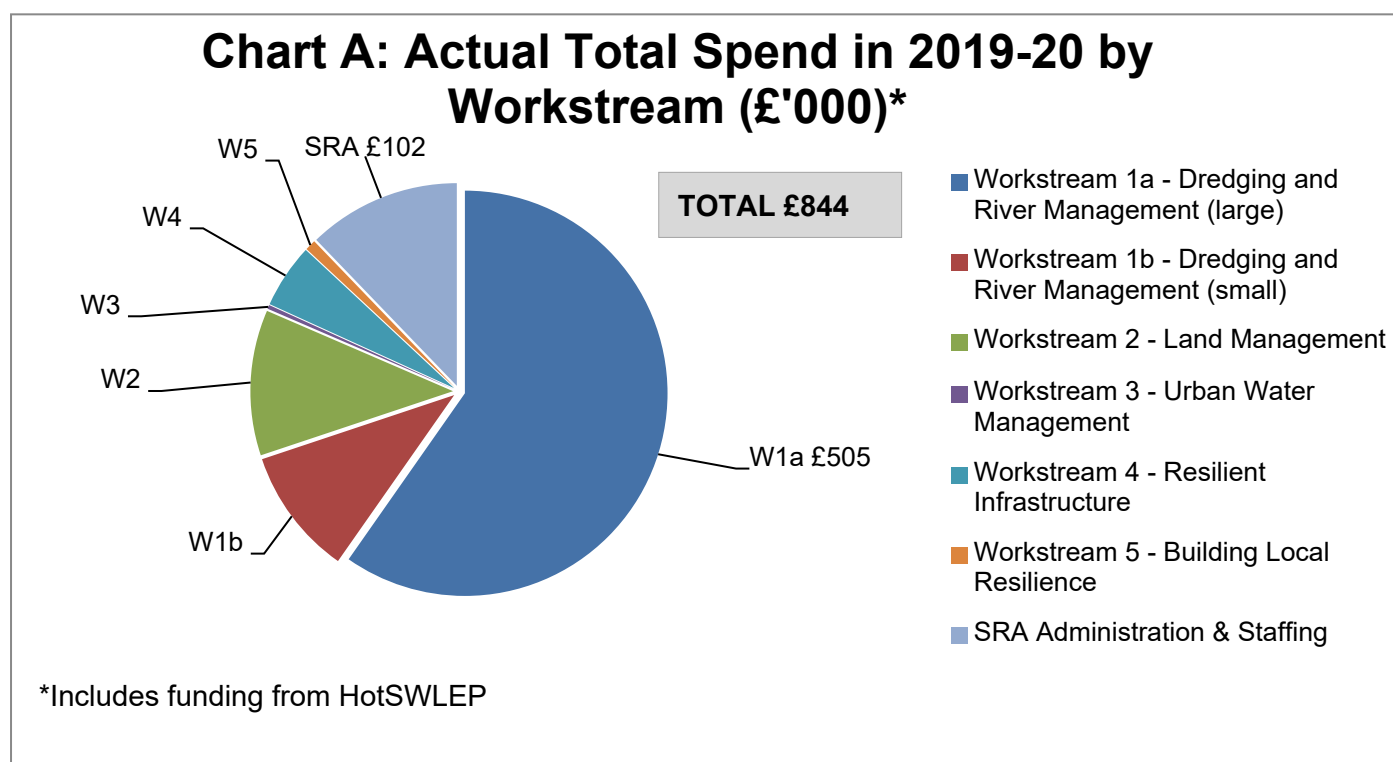
- **Actual** – total funds that have been paid to delivery partners (DP).
- **Committed** – is where DPs have either completed work, but not yet drawn down the funds from the SRA or where DPs have contracted to have works undertaken.
- **Forecast** – an estimate of any further spending on projects which has not yet been claimed or committed

SRA delivery partners can only draw down SRA funding after works are completed and invoices have been paid. This results in a delay between what SRA delivery partners have spent and how much has been claimed from the SRA.

Table B summarises the financial position as at the end of quarter two 2019-20 and committed and forecast spend for 2019-20 and future years. Further detail is provided below the table.

Table B: Somerset Rivers Authority Quarter Two 2019-20 Financial Summary					
	Allocated Funds in 2019-20 £'000	Total Paid to DP in 2019-20 (Q1+2) £'000	2019-20		Forecast 2020-21 Onwards £'000
			Committed £'000	Forecast £'000	
SRA Funding – excl. Growth Deal					
Enhanced Programme	6,722	242	695	1,630	4,063
Contingency	129	0	0	0	129
SRA Administration and Staffing	242	102	100	40	0
SRA Funding – excl. Growth Deal	7,093	344	795	1,670	4,192
Growth Deal Funding					
Pioneer Dredging, Sowey/KSD, Slow the Flow	4,849	500	278	1,714	2,357
Total	11,942	844	1,073	3,384	6,549

Chart A shows the total actual spend for quarter two 2019-20.



During quarters one and two 2019-20 the SRA processed delivery partner claims totalling £844k. Of the total amount paid:

- 59% (£500k) relates to Growth Deal funded actions including delivery of the Sowey/KSD Enhancement Scheme and Pioneer Dredging.
- 29% (£242k) relates to Enhanced Programme works (funded from Local Partners funding)
- 12% (£102k) relates to administration and staffing.

3. Re-allocation of budget to/from contingency

The claims returned by delivery partners for quarter two have identified the following underspends. The reasons for the underspends are listed below.

Table C: Reallocation of funds to contingency			
Project	Delivery Partner	Reason	Amount £
Woolston Moor Scheme	SWTC	Following an initial CCTV survey in advance of starting any works it was concluded no further works required at this location.	14,305
Planning Requirements	SCC, Lead Local Flood Authority	Initially the project was to set out how planning requirements to reduce runoff can be determined. The subsequent SRA funded project for a SuDS Developer Guide will now supersede this project.	12,419
Amount to re-allocate to contingency			26,724

Following approval by the Board to reallocate the funds to contingency, the SRA contingency fund increased by £27k from £129k to £156k.

Recommendation

The SRA Joint Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- Note and comment on the financial performance as at the end of quarter two of 2019-20.

Date: 12/12/2019

Author: Rebecca Hall, Finance Manager

Note: The quarter two 2019-20 detailed commercially sensitive update has been circulated to the Board. This report has been updated with changes approved at the previous SRA Board meeting in September 2019.

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Somerset Rivers Authority Joint Scrutiny Panel Paper

Title: 2020-21 Enhanced Programme and budget

RECOMMENDATION

The Joint Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- Review and comment on the draft 2020-21 Enhanced Programme and budget as listed.

Purpose of the item:

To review the draft 2020-21 Enhanced Programme and budget which was provisionally approved at the SRA Board meeting on the 10 January.

2020-21 Enhanced Programme – background and context

2020-21 will be the fifth year that the SRA will fund an ‘enhanced programme’ of projects to provide an extra level of flood protection and resilience for Somerset residents. This extra level of protection is funded by a shadow precept raised by the County and District Councils. The Parrett and Axe Brue Internal Drainage Boards (IDB) also contribute £10,000 each per annum. The final figure will be confirmed in February 2020, but it is estimated the shadow precept and IDB contribution for financial year 2021-21 will total approximately £2.97¹m.

The SRA Board provisionally approved the programme at its January meeting but the programme cannot formally be approved until all councils have confirmed they will raise the SRA ‘shadow precept’ during their February budget setting meetings.

2020-21 Enhanced Programme – latest status

22 proposals were submitted by SRA Delivery Partners which had a total value of £2.541m. All proposals were scored against how they meet the Flood Action Plan aims and objectives. The SRA Technical Group then reviewed the list of schemes at their meeting on 4 November 2019.

Following the SRA Technical Group assessment one additional proposal – ‘sub-catchment analysis and development of integrated schemes’ - was included by the SRA team at a value of £150k (discussed below). The total cost of scheme proposals for 2020-21 is £2.691m.

The total number of schemes submitted, and the total value of the schemes was lower this year than in previous years. This is the first year that the SRA is in a position to fund all the proposals that were submitted.

¹ Based upon a 2% increase from previous year
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The lower number of schemes submitted this year is, in part, a reflection of the number of SRA funded schemes already in the process of being delivered and the resource required to deliver these. As the SRA matures then the number of projects ‘on the shelf’ for delivery decreases and additional work will be required to develop new schemes into robust proposals.

SRA projects are categorised into 5 workstreams as set out in the Flood Action Plan.

Workstream	Title	2020-21 proposals £000's
W1a & W1b	Dredging and River Management (a = large scheme, b = small scheme)	£325
W2	Land Management	£410
W3	Urban Water Management	£446
W4	Resilient Infrastructure	£1,075
W5	Building local resilience	£285
-	Multiple workstreams	£150
	Total	£2,691

Chart 1

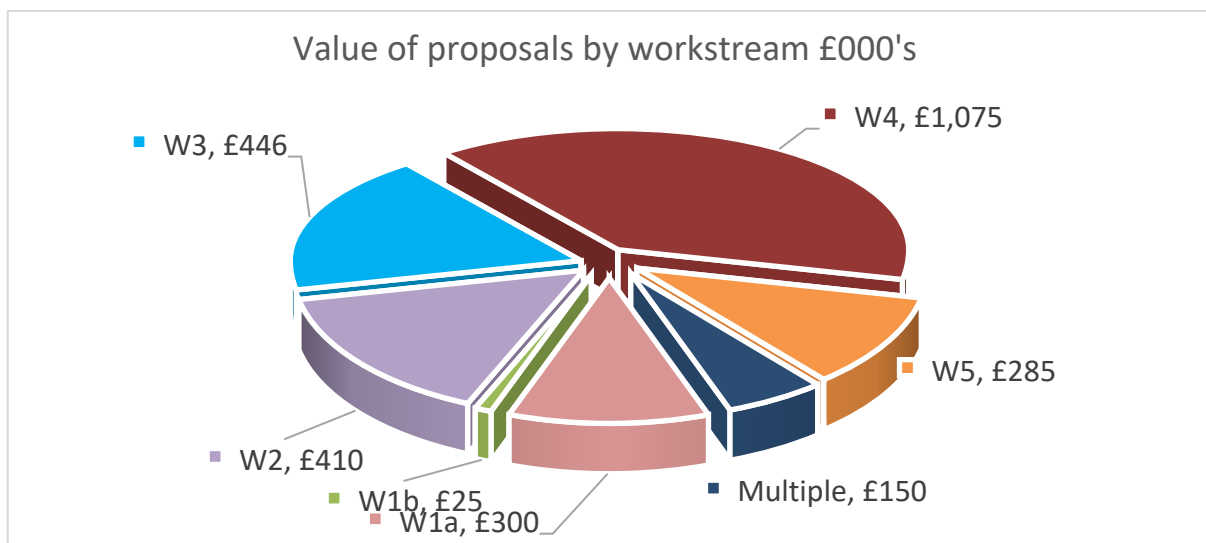
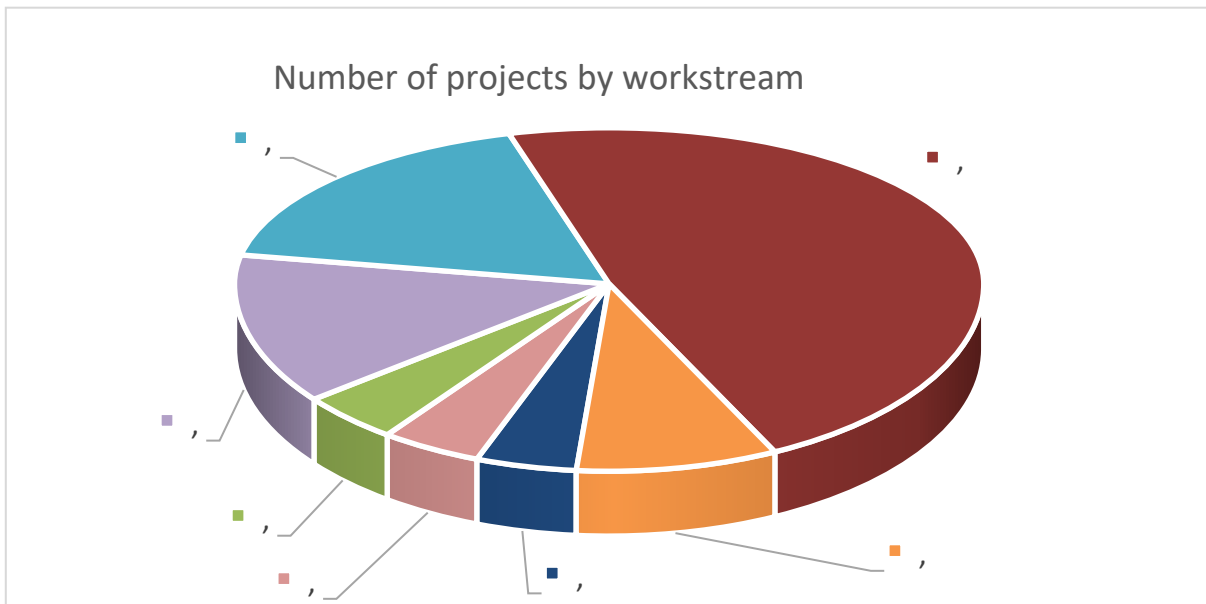


Chart 2



Workstream 4 (W4) – resilient infrastructure - received the highest number of project proposals. Proposals include two significant highway drainage schemes at Carhampton (LHA127) and Kingston St Mary (LHA123) as well as SRA funded extra highway maintenance works such as drain jetting and gully emptying at locations with a high risk of flooding.

W2 – Land Management - FWAG SW have submitted a proposal that would enable the continuation of their successful Hills to Levels work aimed at slowing the flow of water to the lower catchments (FWLM01-21). FWAG SW are also seeking funding to ensure that Somerset farmers and land managers are at the forefront of shaping any future system of environmental land management payments which will replace the current system (FWAGSW ELM).

W3 – Urban water management proposals will see the development of long term plans to address flood risk in Taunton and Yeovil (LLFA24, LLFA23); SRA funding will also facilitate increased coordination and cooperation resulting in more integrated projects that deliver multiple benefits.

The first proposal (LAMDC06) of a series of schemes to address flood risk in in Mendip has also been submitted. This scheme is a direct result of previous SRA investment to support Mendip District Council to identify issues that cannot be addressed under business as usual activity and develop solutions for them.

W1 – Dredging and river management - has fewer schemes than in previous years. Somerset West and Taunton Council have submitted a request for continued support of their work to address flood risk across Taunton through investment in local interventions that can be delivered in the short term (LASWT01).

The Environment Agency have submitted a proposal that will enhance their monitoring capability around Langport which will in turn allow better management of water levels across the moors (EA16).

No additional funds were requested for maintenance dredging. Based upon experience to date there are sufficient funds already allocated from previous years to continue this activity next year.

W5 – Building local resilience - has received one large funding request and one smaller request. The larger proposal would provide match funding to the Adapting the Levels project (WS5COAD2). SRA funding will match European Interreg 2 Seas funding and result in focussed work in communities on the Somerset Levels and Moors which will help people plan to adapt to the effects of climate change.

'Multiple' workstreams – This item relates solely to the proposal (SRALP01) to secure funding that can be used by the SRA team or SRA partners to aid in the development of proposals for inclusion in a future programme of SRA funded works / projects. This proposal would inform projects across all workstreams.

Chart 3 projects by area of activity

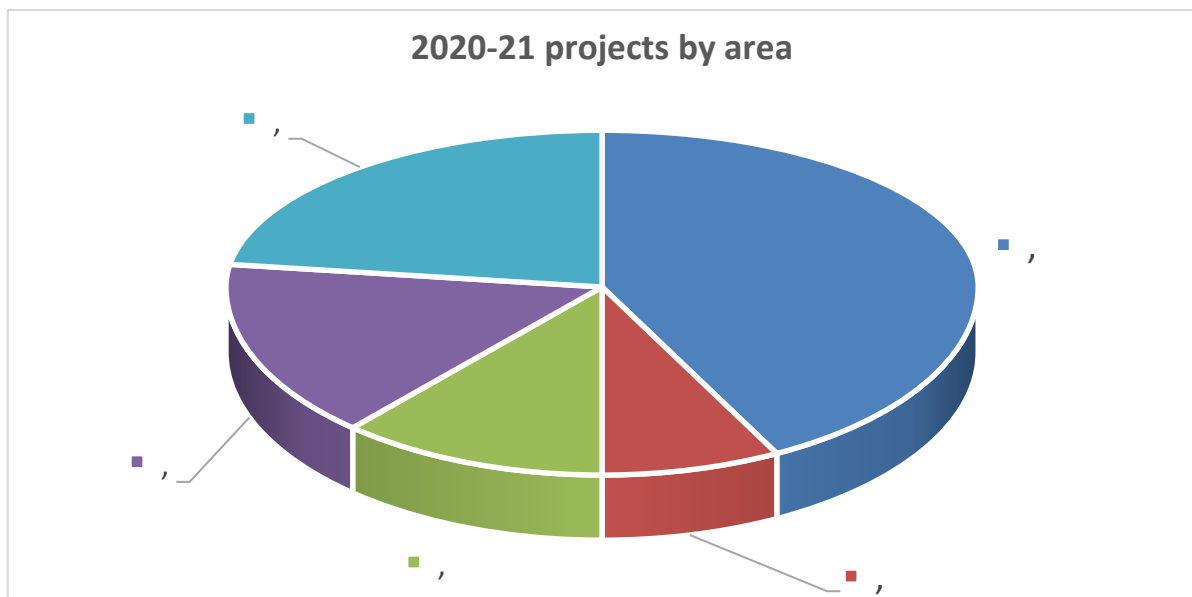
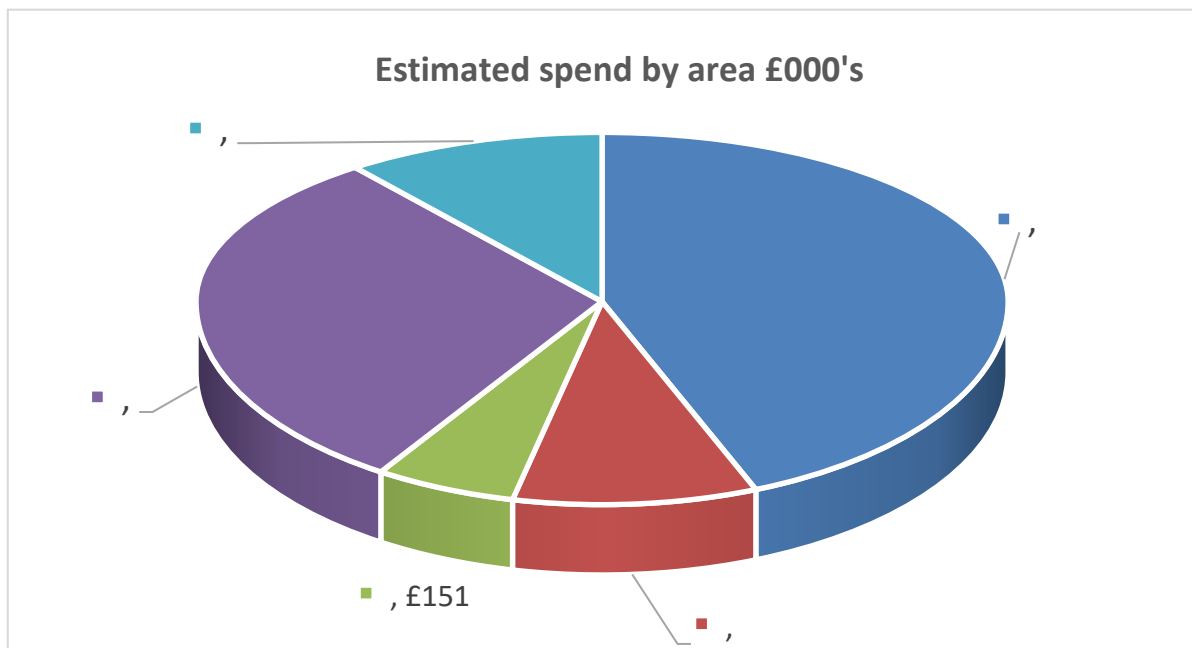


Chart 4 spend by area



A large proportion of scheme proposals are for projects that will be delivered across the whole county – 42%. It should be noted that in many instances physical works in one district will benefit other districts.

Confidential Appendix 2 shows the list of all proposals submitted in prioritised order with costs.

Provisional SRA staff and overheads budget 2020-21

Staffing,	175,000
Overheads, legal, finance, governance, audit etc.	45,000
Ongoing commitments, software license	4,000
Natural England support	12,000
Small projects e.g. website, digital mapping	20,000
Staff Training	2,000
Total	£258,000

Summary

Total value of the 2020-21 Enhanced Programme and SRA staff and overheads budget is £2,949,000. The estimated value of the shadow precept and IDB contributions for 2020-21 is £2,970,000. Based upon the current proposals and budget there will be an unallocated amount of £21,000.

The draft programme has a different workstream balance to it than in previous years with fewer schemes brought forward under the dredging and river management workstream.

There are various reasons for this, one of which is that SRA partners are in the process of delivering significant works under this workstream and as such have limited capacity to bring forward more projects at this time.

The draft programme contains 23 schemes which are a mixture of;

- proposals for brand new projects and interventions to address flooding and increase resilience;
- investment to help Somerset landowners shape the future of environmental land management payments;
- continued support for additional highway improvements and maintenance at areas at higher risk of flooding;
- and, proposals to invest in the preparation of long term plans for addressing flood risk which are better coordinated and better integrated than would be possible without SRA support.

The SRA will have been in existence for 5 years in January 2020; this may be the correct time to review the process used for inviting scheme proposals and which organisations can submit proposals. Looking to the long term it will be important that that SRA has a pipeline of projects which can be used as a basis of a programme of works spread over multiple years. A multi-year programme will help SRA partners plan for, and resource, delivery of future SRA projects.

RECOMMENDATION

The SRA Joint Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

The Joint Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- Review and comment on the draft 2020-21 Enhanced Programme and budget as listed.

Date: 27 January 2020

Author: David Mitchell, Senior Manager Somerset Rivers Authority

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Confidential – 2020-21 Enhanced Programme List – with costs

Appendix 2: 2020-21 Enhanced Programme List – Public version – no costs

Appendix 3: 2020-21 Enhanced Programme MAP

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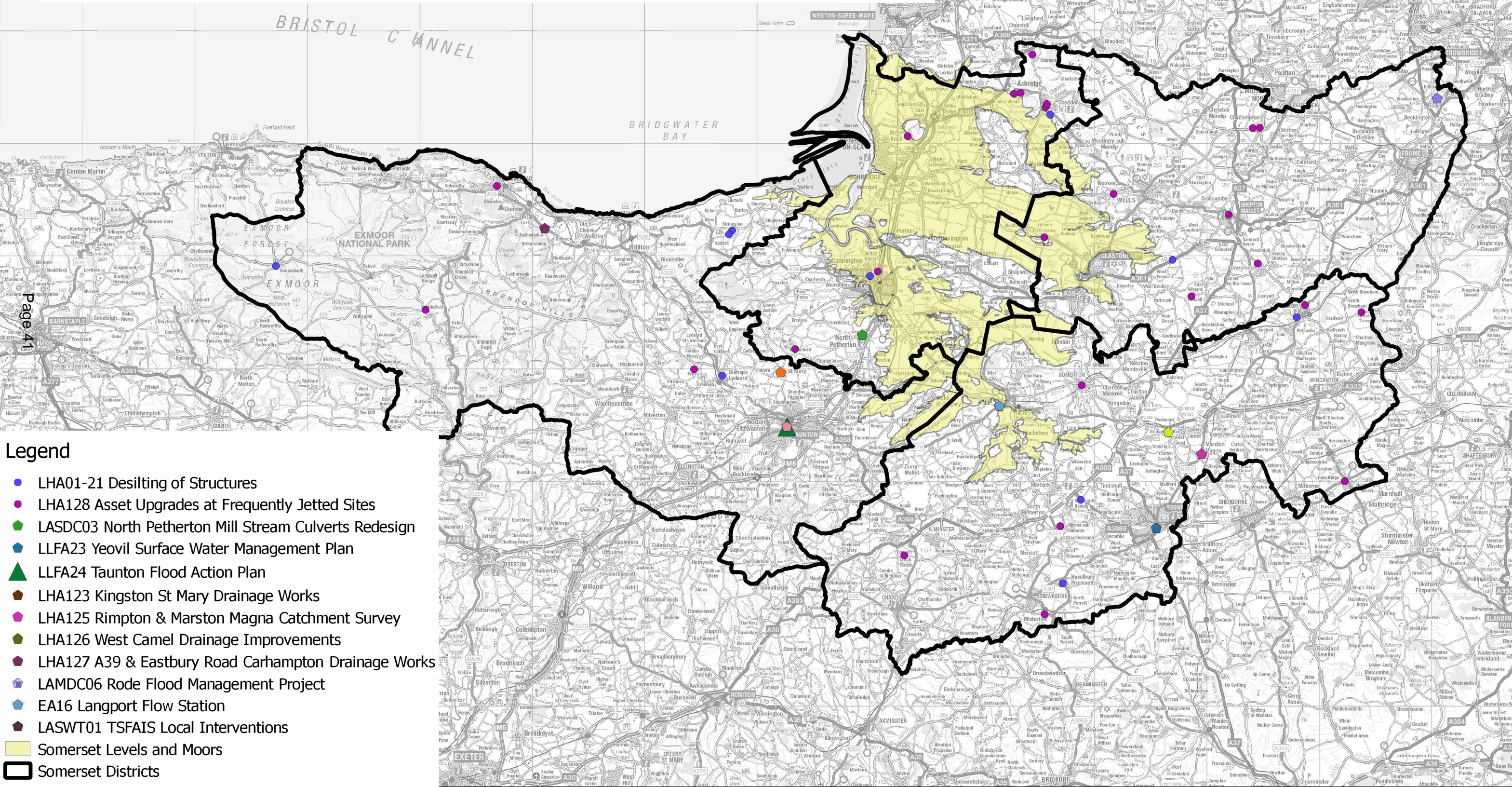
SRA Proposed Enhanced Programme 2020-21					
SRA Reference	TITLE	SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY/WORKS	LOCATION	ADDITIONAL £'S OR NEW WORK	Workstream
FWLM01-21	Hills to Levels - Land Management and Natural Flood Management to Slow the Flow	<p>Somerset Rivers Authority funds the biggest range of natural flood management activities in the UK, as part of Hills to Levels. This work has so far won two national awards. Plans for 2020-21 follow on from earlier successful initiatives, introduce a new service, and measure what is being achieved.</p> <p>There are six main elements, all to be delivered for the SRA by the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group SouthWest (FWAG SW).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design and implement 25 small-scale natural flood management schemes to hold back water in upper catchments and reduce peak flows. This includes match-funding investments made by the EU's Interreg 2 Seas Triple C programme. It also includes match funding for a large Environment Agency Multi-Benefits Project near Crewkerne, de-culverting 300m of Merriott Stream just upstream from Merriott. 2. Increase uptake of better soil management techniques and cropping changes to improve the infiltration of water, and reduce run-off, on 50 farms. This includes 10 split-field trials, 20 soil husbandry reports and five workshops. 3. Respond to 40 referrals of cases where better land management could help to fix problems such as roads flooding because of run-off from fields. In such cases it makes sense to address causes as well as symptoms. Extra SRA funding enables this to happen with partners working together to tackle issues beyond their usual limited remits. 4. Run another online auction Across Somerset, excepting only land in lower-lying Internal Drainage Board areas, as the main purpose of natural flood management (NFM) activities in Somerset is to slow the flow of water down through higher parts of river catchments. Farmers will be able select for themselves different NFM activities, pick out parts of their land where they believe those activities will produce the best flood prevention results for themselves and for local communities and then bid for funding for those activities. Two previous auctions have led to hundreds of successful bids for various extensive improvements. 5. Trial an innovative Soils Patrol in the Back Stream and Halse Water catchments of the River Tone. Learning lessons from an original experiment in the Midlands, a stick and carrot approach will be taken. For two days a week, for 12 months, a qualified officer will be seconded from the Environment Agency to increase regulatory threats for land managers who are not managing soils responsibly. On the flipside, FWAG SW will offer advice on better soil husbandry. 6. Modelling or monitoring at sub-catchment scale to demonstrate the effectiveness of natural flood management measures that have already been installed. Earlier modelling in the Wellhams Brook catchment near Yeovil has posited substantial reductions in peak flows down towards Martock and the River Parrett. 	Across Somerset	Additional	W2
LAMDC06	Rode flood management project	<p>A package of works in Rode near Frome, resulting from the SRA's 2019-20 programme of investigations across Mendip into areas that would benefit from Enhanced Maintenance. Works will reduce flood risks to more than 25 properties and nine roads and also enhance parts of the local environment and provide outdoor educational opportunities at the village school.</p> <p>Works will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -CCTV survey of culverted watercourse to review capacity and condition -Repair and remove blockages / debris where necessary -Assess the need for additional measures for reducing blockages in the future (i.e. trash screens) -Consultation with landowners on potential changes to land management practices to reduce rapid runoff -Enhancements to existing upstream flood attenuation features and potential creation of new features where deemed necessary -Naturalisation of the existing watercourse (de-culverting) including an online wetland area -Tree planting upstream 	Mendip	New	W3
WS5 COAD2	Adapting The Levels	<p>A major climate change project. Adapting the Levels is about getting lots of different people working with each other and with nature to help the Somerset Levels and Moors cope with increased risks of flooding and drought. This project began in February 2019 and will continue until September 2022. Sixty per cent of funding comes from the EU's Interreg 2 Seas Co-Adapt programme (unaffected by Brexit), with the SRA match-funding work on three main strands.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Measures such as improved ditches, stock-handling facilities and wetland machinery to help farms to adapt, along with moves to manage water more naturally, including small-scale investments incubated by local communities. 2) Moor Associations so that land managers and residents can work collaboratively. Initial efforts are being focused particularly on the Langport and Wedmore areas (Wet, West, Tealham and Tadham moors). 3) Long-term plans that acknowledge future uncertainties and therefore seek to build in lots of intelligent flexibility, so that adjustments do not happen too early or too late, in the wrong places, in the wrong ways, but when and where and how is best. Local partners in Adapting the Levels are Somerset County Council, Somerset Wildlife Trust and the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group SouthWest. Other Co-Adapt projects are being carried out in Porlock Vale, part of the River Culm's catchment in the Blackdown Hills and overseas in France, Holland and Belgium. The aim is for lessons learned to give Somerset stronger landscapes and communities. 		New	W5
FWAGSW ELM	Somerset Levels Environmental Land Management Project	<p>This project will try out a new approach to the controlled storage and management of water on the floodplains of the Somerset Levels. There has been much talk nationally about whether farmers and landowners should be paid for taking floodwater onto their land as a public service. A pioneering Somerset trial will discover how much appetite there is among farmers and landowners for performing this service, what it might cost and what difference it might make. A reverse auction approach will be taken, following on from the success of two recent SRA-funded auctions in Somerset for Natural Flood Management measures. In a reverse auction, the winners are those who make the lowest – not the highest – bids. All bids are checked for feasibility and cost-effectiveness. The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) will fund the organisation of this auction as part of its Environmental Land Management (ELM) Tests and Trials programme. The SRA will fund the best bids. The SRA Board agreed in June 2018 that the SRA should help to develop new Environmental Land Management approaches in the Somerset Levels, so the area could try to shape its own distinctive future.</p>		New	W2
LASWT01	TSFAIS Local Interventions	<p>Extra SRA funding will help Somerset West and Taunton Council and the Environment Agency to design three Taunton flood risk reduction projects and manage their delivery. The council estimates that a single major flood could cost Taunton's economy up to £50million. The number of Taunton properties currently at risk is 1031. By 2019, because of climate change, that number is expected to rise to 2548 – so action has to be taken. The council and the Environment Agency, backed by the SRA, have been studying how to reduce flood risks from the River Tone and its complex network of tributaries, particularly the Galmington, Sherford and Mill Streams.</p> <p>Eleven options are favoured. The first three being lined up for delivery, backed by the SRA, are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Optimising flood water storage at Longrun Meadow through building 1500m of raised embankments up to 1.8metres high. This will benefit 687 properties. 2) Raising low spots in the River Tone's flood defences from Frieze Hill to Town Bridge. This will benefit 508 homes, businesses and facilities such as the police station and council offices, BT exchange and French Weir surgery, plus the A3027 and A3088. 3) Raising Firepool Lock gates to prevent River Tone floodwater entering the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal at Firepool and raising 750metres of River Tone defences between Firepool Lock and the A258 Obridge Viaduct. This will benefit 219 properties. <p>Somerset West and Taunton Council has put aside £6million for projects 1 and 2. Further funding for project 3, and other TSFAIS elements, is being sought.</p> <p>Developing future investment strategies will be a key part of the new Taunton Flood Action Plan being backed by the SRA in 2020-21 (see below).</p>	Somerset West and Taunton	Additional	W1a
LLFA23	Yeovil Surface Water Management Plan	<p>Yeovil has several significant areas at high or medium risk of surface water flooding. These include sections of the busy A30, A37 and A3088. Better understanding of flood risks across Yeovil, and producing a long-term action plan to reduce those risks, will bring numerous benefits. It will enable much stronger bids to be made for national Flood Defence Grant In Aid payments for tackling specific problems. It will improve the delivery of local maintenance activities and investments in infrastructure. It will increase public engagement and understanding, and influence land use planning, emergency planning and future developments.</p> <p>Somerset Rivers Authority is funding the creation of a Yeovil Surface Water Management Plan in partnership with Somerset County Council's Flood and Water Management Team, because that Team alone does not have enough money for a Plan of this size and scope. Other SRA partners will be involved, to make sure that all angles are considered and that all parties will find the Plan an essential guide. Yeovil Rivers Community Trust will be among those contributing valuable local knowledge</p>	South Somerset	New	W3
LLFA24	Taunton Flood Action Plan	<p>A 25 Year Taunton Flood Action Plan will be produced to guide the management of flood risks from all sources. One major ambition is to join up the work done as part of the Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements Scheme into risks from the River Tone and its many tributaries (fluvial flooding) with other efforts focused more on surface water and rainfall (pluvial flooding).</p> <p>Elements brought together will include Somerset County Council's surface water management plan, the county council and Wessex Water's integrated catchment modelling, Wessex Water's drainage and wastewater management plans, the Environment Agency and Westcountry Rivers Trust's Tone catchment strategy, Somerset West and Taunton Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Taunton Garden Town plans, and the county council's partnership work on highways flooding hotspots, Sustainable Drainage Systems and the EU's Project Sponge2020.</p> <p>This work will be led for the SRA by Somerset County Council, working closely with Wessex Water and numerous other partners. The county council is proposing to contribute to the costs of developing a Taunton Flood Action Plan. In line with the SRA's remit, the Plan is intended to open up new collaborative ways of getting funding and spending it efficiently. It should also help to provide environmental benefits such as better water quality and better habitats for wildlife.</p> <p>The overarching aim is to make Taunton a safer, healthier and more attractive place to live.</p>	Somerset West and Taunton	New	W3

SRA Reference	TITLE	SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY/WORKS	LOCATION	ADDITIONAL £'S OR NEW WORK	Workstream
LHA03-21	Across Somerset enhanced gully emptying	Gullies in places most at risk of flooding across Somerset are cleaned once a year by Somerset County Council. Extra SRA funding means that 22,872 gullies can be emptied twice a year. The aim is to help keep roads open in places highly susceptible to flooding, make them safer, preserve access for communities, and safeguard properties from flooding, all in line with the objectives of Somerset's 20 Year Flood Action Plan. This year gully-emptying is part of a six-pronged attack on highway flooding problems Across Somerset, along with drain jetting, asset upgrades at frequently jetted sites, de-silting of structures, silt-trap emptying and the Hills to Levels system of highway referrals to reduce run-off from land onto roads. Together these works benefit residents, businesses and visitors.	Across Somerset	Additional	W4
LHA125-21	Across Somerset enhanced silt-trap emptying	Silt-traps are designed to reduce flood risks by collecting silt washed out from land near roads and preventing it from clogging up highway drainage systems. Somerset has around 80 silt-traps (not including cattle grids) at places known to be susceptible to flooding. Extra SRA funding enables Somerset County Council's Highways Department to carry out a programme of proactive cleansing, so that traps themselves do not get blocked up, but work as they should. Across Somerset Enhanced Silt-trap Emptying is part of a six-pronged SRA attack on highway flooding problems, along with drain jetting, de-silting of structures, asset upgrades at frequently jetted sites, gully-emptying and the Hills to Levels system of highway referrals to reduce run-off from land onto roads. Together these works help to keep roads open, make them safer, preserve access for communities, and safeguard properties from flooding. They reduce annoyance and inconvenience for residents, businesses and visitors.	Across Somerset	Additional	W4
LHA04-21	Across Somerset enhanced drain jetting	Extra SRA-funded drain jetting targets places across Somerset at high risk of flooding. Drains are usually only jetted by Somerset County Council on a reactive basis: that is, once they have become blocked. Pro-active jetting is designed to stop drains from getting blocked in the first place, by removing silt and debris. The aim is to keep roads open during times of flood. Across Somerset Enhanced Drain Jetting is part of a six-pronged SRA attack on highway flooding problems, along with gully-emptying, de-silting of structures, asset upgrades at frequently jetted sites, silt-trap emptying and the Hills to Levels system of highway referrals to reduce run-off from land onto roads. Together these works help to keep roads open, make them safer, preserve access for communities, and safeguard properties from flooding. They reduce annoyance and inconvenience for residents, businesses and visitors.	Across Somerset	Additional	W4
LHA127	A39 & Eastbury Road Carhampton drainage survey and works	The A39 through Carhampton is the main route in and out of West Somerset but floods regularly to a depth that can make it impassable. Eastbury Road in Carhampton is part of the secondary route for people travelling between places such as Bridgwater, Taunton and Williton and Dunster, Minehead and Exmoor. Eastbury Road floods along with the A39, because water running off private land overwhelms existing drainage systems. Several properties are also affected by flooding. Somerset Rivers Authority is determined to reduce flood risks in Carhampton. In the first phase of this two-year scheme, a topographical survey will be carried out for the SRA by Somerset County Council's Highways Department to help establish the best options and produce detailed designs. Drainage improvements will then be delivered by the Highways Department using contractors Skanska. Carhampton Parish Council will help to get landowners to fulfil their obligations to clear adjacent water courses. This major scheme follows on from other smaller improvements funded by the SRA in and around Carhampton, and ties in with two other ongoing SRA-funded projects being led by Somerset West and Taunton Council, for drainage improvements in the Hill Lane area and wooden silt-traps along Bridcott Stream.	Somerset West and Taunton	New	W4
LLFA25	Appointment of full-time SuDS inspector	SuDS are designed to control and reduce flows of water from hard impervious surfaces such as roads, roofs and pavements. If heavy rain cannot infiltrate into the ground, run-off can increase local flood risks. SuDS seek to quash this problem by using natural measures such as streams, ponds and reed beds and techniques such as rainwater harvesting, permeable paving and tree-planting. In such ways SuDS can also reduce pollution, improve water quality and make places greener and more attractive for people and wildlife. However, a recent major SRA review of SuDS across Somerset found significant evidence of defects and weaknesses in the national approach to managing water at new developments. As well as funding the production of new Somerset-specific SuDS guidance for developers, to encourage more high-quality design and better place-making, the SRA is therefore also beefing up inspection processes. Sites will be inspected at various points during their construction either through proactive engagement with developers or through following up notifications by local planning authorities. Key activities will also be checked. The aim is to ensure that SuDS not adopted by a Water & Sewerage Company, district council, highway authority or other public body are constructed and function as designed and approved through the planning process. As SuDS inspections are far from the norm across England, lessons learned will be of national interest.	Across Somerset	New	W3
LHA123	Kingston St Mary drainage works	Properties in Kingston St Mary have flooded 37 times since 2006 and there are 98 records of flood-related calls to Somerset County Council's local area highways office. Funding from Somerset Rivers Authority will enable the county council's highways department to design and implement a scheme for Lodes Lane that will benefit 27 homes, The Swan Inn and many drivers going through this village between Taunton and the Quantocks. The plan is for detailed preparatory survey work to be followed by the installation of a new high-capacity drainage system. In partnership with the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group SouthWest, the parish council and Kingston St Mary's current county councillor, farmers will also be encouraged to make changes to reduce soil erosion and run-off from their land. The aim is to avoid problems being caused by streams silting-up and road drainage systems getting blocked. The SRA is funding this scheme because it would otherwise take up the whole local area highways office budget for this type of work. However, the local office is contributing £20,000 and the county councillor has also said he will contribute some of his limited 'Prevention' budget.	Somerset West and Taunton	New	W4
SRALP01	Sub-catchment analysis and development of integrated schemes	The first stage of a long campaign designed to reduce flood risks on selected watercourses. This work follows on from the success of some detailed and extensive SRA-funded studies done across Mendip in 2018-19 and 2019-20. Approaches taken in Mendip will be carried over to other Somerset districts. Catchments will be divided up into sub-catchments. They will be analysed against various data sets, such as records of flooding and flood risk maps, and prioritised according to need. The SRA will use its knowledge of what other work has been, and is being, delivered by different Flood Risk Management Authorities (FRMAs) to identify opportunities for collaboration – and to spot gaps in provision. Gaps will be tackled by the development of integrated ways of tackling problems, in addition to the usual work of FRMAs, in line with the SRA's remit of giving Somerset extra flood protection and resilience. The works being planned at Rode in this year's SRA Enhanced Programme are an example of a scheme that has come about through research, site visits and discussion. This scheme combines different methods of reducing flood risks, rooted in local knowledge, wider analysis and extra SRA funding and co-operation.	Across Somerset	Additional	Multiple
EA16	Langport flow station	Extra SRA funding will enable the Environment Agency to install a permanent flow gauge in the River Parrett at Langport. Used in combination with data from existing gauges at Chiselborough, Yeovil, Donyatt and Slathe, information from a new Langport flow station will benefit approximately 770 square kilometres, that is the catchment area above Langport for the Parrett, Isle and Yeo and all of their tributaries. Getting better information will allow for earlier and more flexible operation of key control structures on the River Parrett, River Sowy and King's Sedgemoor Drain. It will strengthen flood warning systems for local people and businesses, and help with the implementation of Water Level Management Plans. As the SRA is going to increase the capacity of the River Sowy in 2020, this Langport flow station scheme is also timely. SRA funding will specifically cover matters such as flow gauge infrastructure design, kiosk, webcam, outstation, stilling tube, timber instrument mounting platform and concrete plinth and ducting.	South Somerset	Additional	W1b
LHA01-21	Across Somerset de-silting of structures	De-silting increases the flow of water through bridges and culverts and cuts the risk of flooding on roads and in nearby properties. It removes watercourse 'bottle necks' allowing whole systems to work more efficiently. It also reduces the risk of structural damage to bridges or culverts caused by heavy loads of silt pressing against them, or by floating debris colliding and getting stuck. Sites that would benefit from de-silting are identified by Somerset County Council's Highways Department through records kept by local highways officers, or concerns raised by other authorities or members of the public. SRA funding is required as structures are not routinely de-silted by Somerset County Council. The work is part of a six-pronged SRA attack on highway flooding problems Across Somerset, along with drain jetting, gully-emptying, targeted edge of road clearing, silt-trap emptying and the Hills to Levels system of highway referrals to reduce run-off from land onto roads. Together these works benefit residents, businesses and visitors.	Across Somerset	Additional	W4
FWLM02	Trees for Water Action Fund	A tree and hedge planting action fund to help local communities reduce flood risks resulting from surface water run-off issues. This SRA initiative could fund up to 21,000 trees or 40,000 hedge plants, depending on the eventual balance between hedge planting and tree planting. Parish councils and local community groups (such as flood wardens and tree wardens) will be helped to arrange planting at suitable sites by the Reimagining the Levels group and the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group SouthWest. Smaller sites in strategically important locations in Mendip and South Somerset are expected to feature prominently. Trees For Water Action Fund is particularly designed to suit sites not large enough for Countryside Stewardship grants and not special enough to concern Natural England. The SRA wants this scheme to be flexible, bespoke and un-bureaucratic. Innovative, environmentally-sensitive agroforestry approaches will be encouraged.	Across Somerset	Additional	W2

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Area Wide Projects

- Somerset Levels and Moors - FWAGSW ELM Environmental Land Management Project; WS5 COAD2 Adapting the Levels
- Across Somerset - LHA03-21 Gully Emptying; LHA122-21 Silt Trap Emptying; LHA04-21 Drain Jetting; SRALP01 Sub-catchment Analysis; FWML02 Trees for Water Action Fund; FWLM01-21 Hills to Levels; LLFA25 Full-time SuDs Inspector; LLFA22 CCTV Surveys of Riparian Culverts; WS5PILOT2 Community Flooding Information Pilot



Legend

- LHA01-21 Desilting of Structures
- LHA128 Asset Upgrades at Frequently Jetted Sites
- LASDC03 North Petherton Mill Stream Culverts Redesign
- LLFA23 Yeovil Surface Water Management Plan
- LLFA24 Taunton Flood Action Plan
- LHA123 Kingston St Mary Drainage Works
- LHA125 Rimpleton & Marston Magna Catchment Survey
- LHA126 West Camel Drainage Improvements
- LHA127 A39 & Eastbury Road Carhampton Drainage Works
- LAMDC06 Rode Flood Management Project
- EA16 Langport Flow Station
- LASWT01 TSFAIS Local Interventions
- Somerset Levels and Moors
- Somerset Districts



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Somerset Rivers Authority Joint Scrutiny Panel Paper

Title: Heart of The South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Project Spend

RECOMMENDATION

The SRA Board is asked to:

1. Note and comment on the latest position regarding LEP funded projects.

Purpose of the item:

To update the Panel on progress with Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) funded projects recognising that financial year 2020 - 21 is the final year for use of LEP funds.

Background and context

In 2015 the Heart of the South Wes LEP allocated £13.049m of 'Growth Deal' funding to the 'Somerset Flooding' project. The project was described in the funding agreement as:

Phase 2 of the Somerset Levels and Moors 20 Year Flood Action Plan and consists of a package of measures to reduce the duration, depth and frequency of flooding on the Somerset Levels and Moors. This will safeguard houses, commercial premises, communities and infrastructure on the Somerset Levels and Moors and increase business confidence, contributing to the creation of new jobs and new houses.

The project funding was split across four distinct categories:

Category	Growth Deal £m	Status
Dredging and river management	£2.45	In progress
River Sowey / Kings Sedgemoor Drain enhancements (including Beer Wall and Chedzoy)	£7.984	In progress
Bridgwater Tidal Barrier	£2.0	Spend complete
Land Management	£0.55	Spend complete
Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements	£0.065	Spend complete
Total	£13.049	

LEP funding is provided by central government. Government has set a hard deadline for spending of LEP funds of the end of March 2021. LEP funding must be spent by this deadline.

Latest status

The financial year 2020 – 2021 will be the final year of the LEP funding allocation. The SRA Board and delivery partners are now very focussed on ensuring that all LEP funding is used by the set deadline. The SRA Board will be closely monitoring progress over the coming months

To date £9.24m of the £13.049m of LEP funding has been spent.

The remaining £3.8m is primarily allocated to further dredging, River Sowy / Kings Sedgemoor Drain enhancements and their associated mitigation actions. There are also some other projects in receipt of smaller allocations. The remaining funds break down as follows.

Project	Value	Delivery Partner
Further pioneer dredging and mitigation (Oath to Burrowbridge & Northmoor to M5)	£0.7m	Parrett Internal Drainage Board
River Sowy / Kings Sedgemoor Drain enhancements and mitigation (Phase 1 main channel improvements)	£2.8m	Environment Agency
North Drain Pumping Station Improvements	£0.17m	Environment Agency
Field Way, Highbridge (contribution £1.5m surface water flooding scheme)	£0.10m	Wessex Water
Total	£3.77	

Detailed project information can be found on the SRA website - <https://www.somersetiversauthority.org.uk/> .

Project Status

- Oath to Burrowbridge – 2.2km of river dredged during October and November with 21,000m³ of material removed and placed at the rear of the river bank. Majority of works complete. Contractor will return when weather improves to undertake reinstatement works.
- Northmoor to M5 – trial dredge using water injection dredging occurring January 2020. Aim is to undertake additional dredging using the WID method during 2020-21.

- River Sowy / KSD – extensive planning and design work undertaken. Consultation with landowners January 2020. Preparing to tender for delivery of mitigation structures. Channel works taking place during 2020-21.
- North Drain Pumping Station – works planned for summer 2020.
- Field Way – public engagement events January 2020. Work to begin February 2020.

Summary:

Most projects are either under way or at the final stages of planning and design before implementation. There is a degree of uncertainty associated with the proposed dredging between Northmoor and the M5. This is a result of the need to undertake some trials to confirm the water injection method is suitable for this section of river.

The largest portion of unspent LEP funds are allocated to the River Sowy / KSD enhancement project. The Environment Agency project team are well advanced in the design and planning for this project with a high level of confidence that the LEP spending deadline will be met.

As we enter the final year of LEP projects SRA Officers and the Board will be closely monitoring progress to ensure all projects meet the LEP deadline.

RECOMMENDATION

The SRA Board is asked to:

1. Note and comment on the latest position regarding LEP funded projects.

Date: 23 January 2020

Author: David Mitchell

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