

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

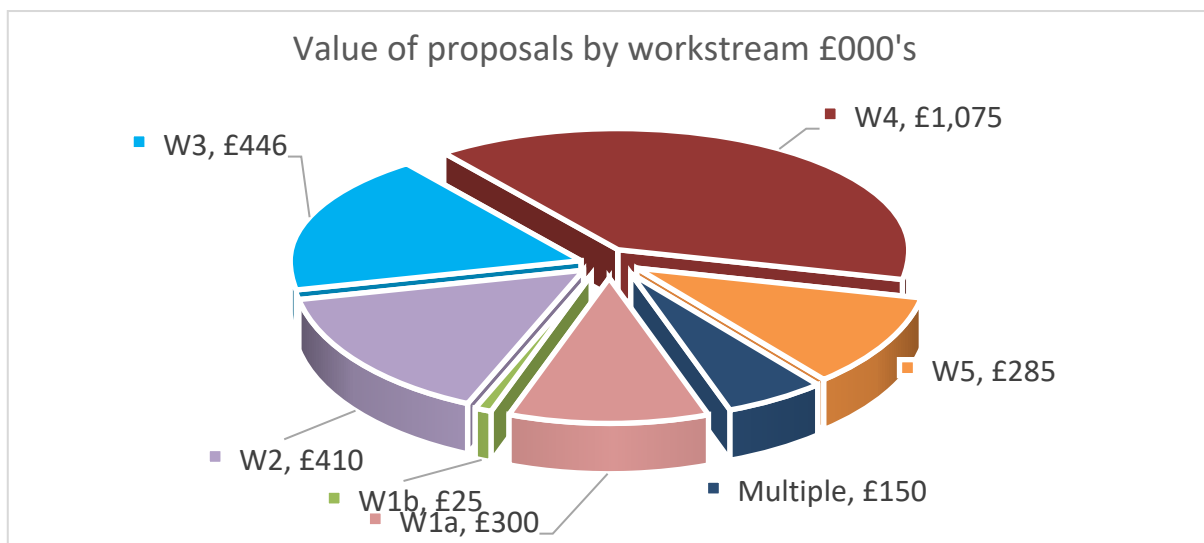
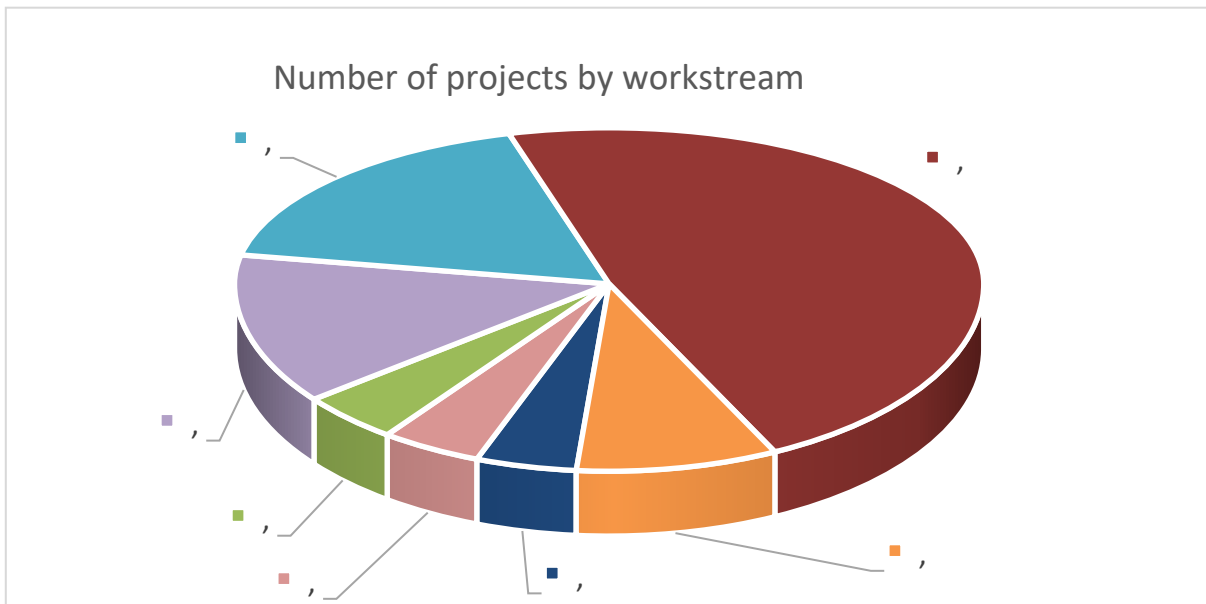


Chart 2



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

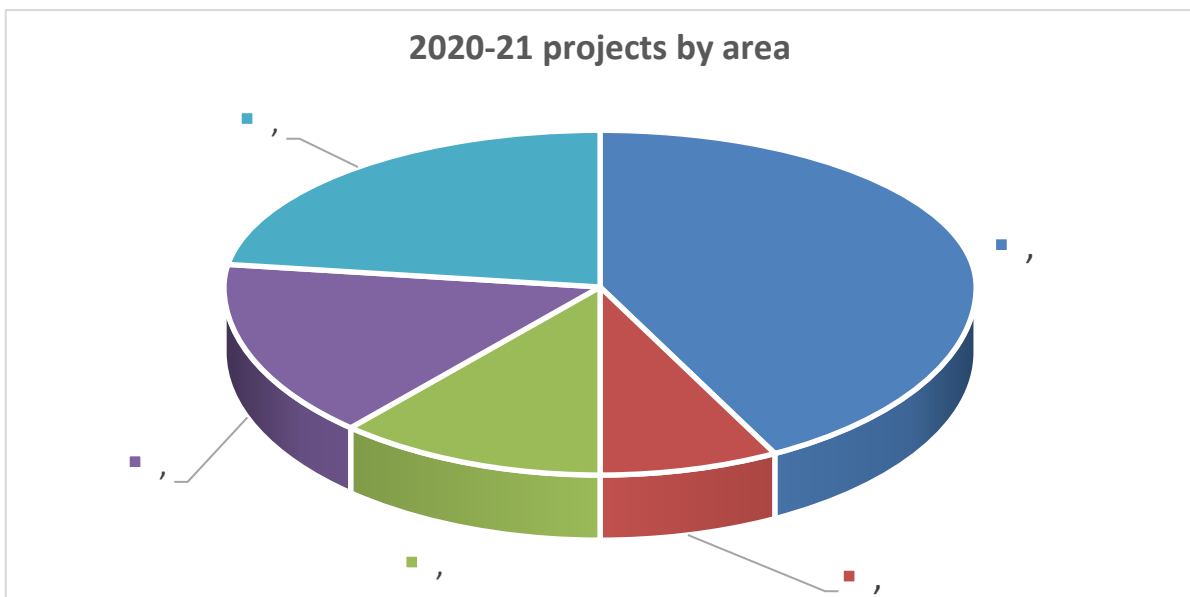
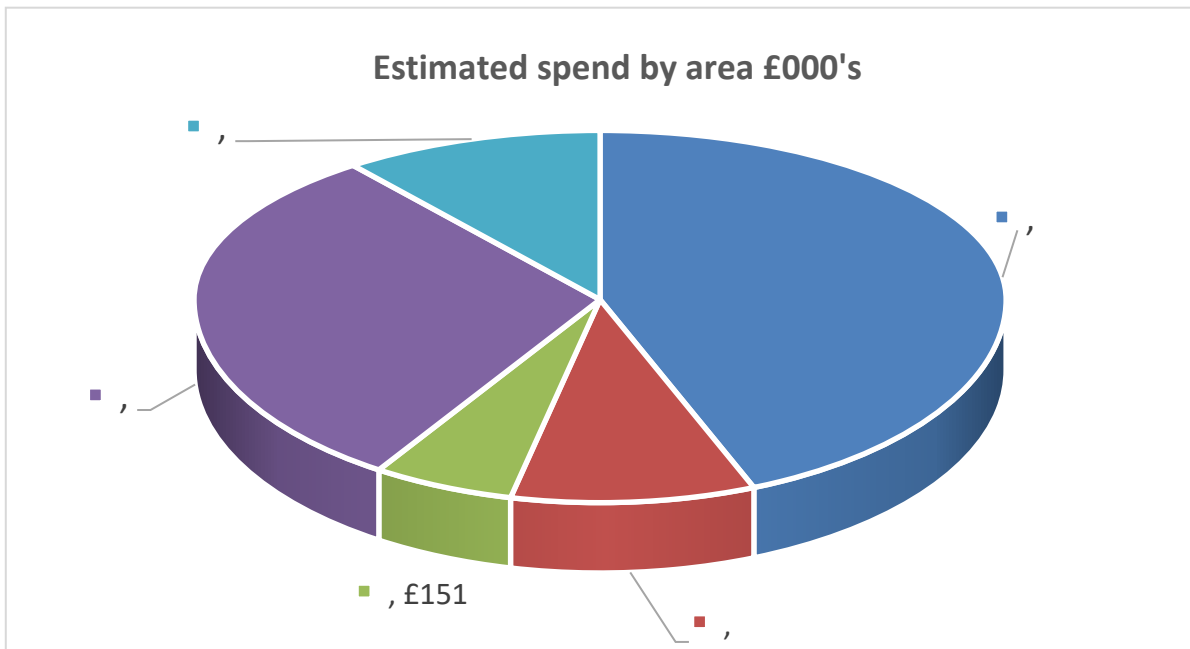


Chart 4 spend by area



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.

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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

